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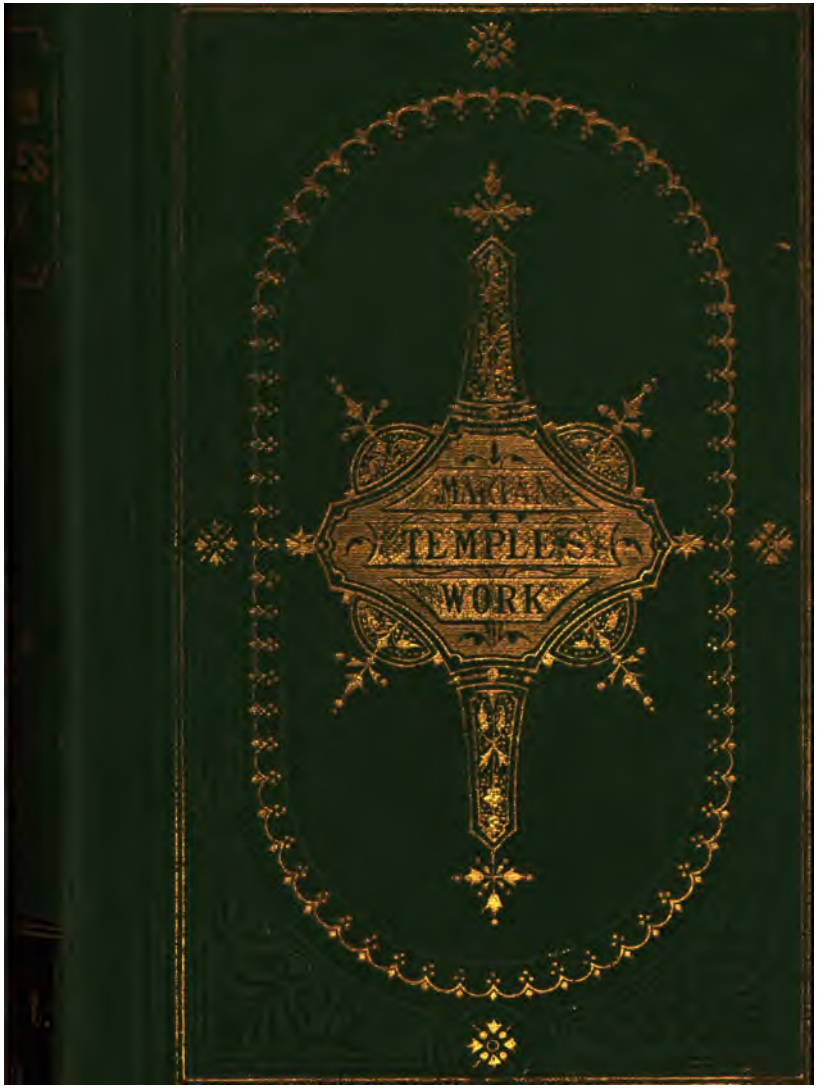
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THE WARM FRIEND

OF

RAGGED SCHOOLS IN ABERDEEN.

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MARIAN TEMPLE'S WORK.

CHAPTER I.

'And how does Miss and Madam do,
The little boy and all?
All tight and well. And how do you,
Good Mr. What-d'ye-call?'

COWPER.

'HEIGHO!' sighed Marian Temple; 'heigho! it's no good trying. I always do fail, and always shall, I do believe. I wonder if for this one evening I shall succeed in subduing my besetting sin, in taking a milk-and-water view of life in fact;' and at the idea a slightly sarcastic smile curled her pretty upper lip, the peculiar shortness of which might perhaps hint

at the failing which the young lady desired to avoid.

The speaker stood at that moment before her mirror in evening dress; and a very graceful, fashionable-looking woman she saw reflected in it, one whom the little world of Friarton with one voice greeted as its 'queen of beauty.' Yet it was not vanity that she is appropriating as her besetting sin; for, to tell truth, there are many persons less richly gifted by nature, to whom personal adornment is an affair much more momentous than to Miss Temple. It was a source of no small annoyance to her maid, Prescott, that dress and fashion presented so few attractions to her mistress. That injured young person has just entered from an adjoining apartment, carrying in her hand a tempting arrangement of artificial flowers, and says, 'Now, Miss, if you please—just this one little bunch in your hair, and you are perfect.'

'No, girl; don't worry. How often must I repeat to you, "Beauty unadorned, adorned

the most ?"' replied her mistress, smiling, and putting aside the flowers which Prescott was displaying to such advantage, and with such a beseeching air before the mirror.

'Ah, ma'am, you don't care a pin how you look. And this is such a charming flower; please do allow me to fix it, just here.'

'No, Prescott, not to-night.'

'And next time you say the same, and last night the same,' replied the girl pettishly; but returning to the charge, added, 'And please, ma'am, Mr. Walter is below to drive with you; so, if you please, just this once.'

To please the girl, Miss Temple's kind heart relented, and the roses were added to her otherwise simple toilette.

'What a foolish girl you are, Prescott! Where is the use of roses and finery for those *pokey* people the Marletons?'

With these words she descended to the drawing-room, where she found, as her maid had said, her cousin Walter Temple. The carriage was announced, and the cousins only

awaited the appearance of Marian's brother to set out for Myrtle Bank, about a mile distant from the town.

Marian's first words on entering the drawing-room, were *Et tu Brute!* addressed to her cousin, who, with the aid of the mirror, was administering the final twirl to a pair of very commendable moustaches. 'Are you really going to condescend to present your very valuable self at such a *slow* affair as Mrs. Marleton's dinners are wont to be, where one has to be put through a course of babies, which to hear is to forget? Walter, you surprise me!'

'I likewise am surprised. But Marleton, you know, is my grandmother's stepdaughter's second cousin's nephew, and considers himself as a kinsman in duty bound to patronize me.'

'Pray stop, Walter, I am lost in the web of genealogy for which you appear to have so keen a scent. What relation is Mr. Marleton to Mr. Walter Temple?'

'A problem which no man can solve; but I should say he *may* be a Scotch cousin. Will you give me a seat in your carriage, and let me glide in behind the shadow of your copious skirts?'

'Yes, whenever Melgund makes his appearance.'

This gentleman, who was Marian's brother and a dozen years her senior, was at that instant heard calling impatiently from the entrance hall, 'Marian, are you ready? we shall be late as usual.'

'You are always late, Melgund, and console yourself with the idea that saying *we* removes a part of the guilt to other shoulders.'

'My dear Marian, has Prescott brushed your hair the wrong way, or what other cause has so disturbed the wonted equanimity of your temper?'

'Melgund!' uttered in a tone of vexation, was all the reply. She remained silent till Walter said—

'So, so, fair cousin, and whom are we to meet to-night?'

'How should I be competent to answer such an important question? Should you not also wish to ascertain beforehand what is to be Mrs. Marleton's *menu?*'

'Nay, I am no epicure, Marian; but I suppose we shall have the half of the stupid people of Friarton!'

'Possibly. I know of only one to be present.'

'And that is—?'

'One of us; and Melgund, you know, is irreproachable. It remains for you and me to divide the compliment.'

'Gallantry forbids me in this instance to refuse it,' he answered good-naturedly.

Arrived at Myrtle Bank, the Temples were ushered into the drawing-room, where they found themselves, as Melgund had predicted, the last to arrive.

Friarton being only a provincial town, Mrs. Marleton's guests were mostly known

to one another, and the Temples were not strangers to any present, with one exception. This was an elderly lady, hard featured, and angular in figure, awkward and unprepossessing in appearance, and dressed in a style which showed plainly that she was not a woman of fashion. She wore an old-fashioned brown silk gown, and a head-dress of contemporaneous antiquity. Marian found herself placed directly opposite to her, and had opportunity to observe the peculiarities of the unknown guest. Walter also, who had taken up a position at the back of his cousin's chair, was not slow to make notes of the peculiar appearance of the elderly lady on the opposite sofa.

Marian had meanwhile recognised in her the aunt of the new vicar of St. Paul's, Friarton, whom she had seen in the vicar's pew upon several Sabbaths of late. Miss Temple and Walter knew well enough that they were both making mental comments on the unfortunate Miss Brand, by that strange

instinct which sometimes influences people alike, and Walter said in an undertone, meant for the ear of his cousin only, 'Peculiar!' 'Reclaimed from the flood!' was her whispered reply; and just at that moment dinner was announced, Marian being handed over to the care of Mr. Smith, a man equally distinguished by the large number of his children and the small number of his ideas; while to Walter's charge fell a dowager of threescore. To the onerous duty devolved on him he resigned himself with so good a grace, and discharged it in so amiable a manner, as to win golden opinions from the good lady. Mr. Smith pronounced Miss Temple to be an uncommonly clever, agreeable young woman. It is doubtful, however, if the good man recognised where the point of Miss Temple's wit lay.

As a young lady, Mrs. Marleton had been a nice lively girl; but these characteristics had gradually disappeared as, one after another, ten children had appealed to her ma-

ternal solicitude, until now, strictly speaking, she was simply the mother of her little Marletons, and she was nothing more. Her thoughts all inclining towards nursery and schoolroom, her conversation was apt to descend too much into the familiar phraseology of domestic life—servants and children forming the leading, if not the sole topics of her remarks. Fortunately, upon the present occasion, Mrs. Marleton's guests were mostly drawn from a circle familiar with the leading idea of their hostess. Miss Brand and Marian Temple were the only unmarried ladies present, and, as we have seen, they were persons most dissimilar. Miss Brand was seated rather aloof from the others, awkwardly turning over the leaves of an album, the pages of which were crowded with the Marletons in every conceivable attitude and costume, from that of a nude baby to Mr. Marleton himself, equipped for following the Friarton hounds.

Marian had been for some time listening,

or trying to listen, to the voluble remarks of Mrs. Smith, detailing indiscriminately the various ailments and excellences of her numerous sons and daughters. Now Marian could with ease have conversed upon the last new volume of poetry, travels, history, or fiction, upon politics or popular preachers; but with Mrs. Smith's tit-bits of family history she felt herself unequal to cope; and, after several unsuccessful efforts to do so, her mind, in spite of herself, wandered from the question, and was soon soaring in regions of fancy very far removed from the prosaic influences which surrounded her in the drawing-room at Myrtle Bank.

Matty Smith, Marian was informed, had been afflicted by the hooping-cough, followed closely by the measles, 'the dregs of which were often so trying;' while Gabriel had unfortunately stepped into the bath before cold water had been added, thereby scalding himself to an alarming extent. 'And Ruby, my eldest girl,' Mrs. Smith con-

tinued, 'is quite an astonishing scholar. She is first in all her classes, and is really a beautiful player. You would be quite surprised, my dear Miss Temple—' At this point Marian, recalled by the sound of her own name, said in sympathizing accents, 'Poor child! what a pity! It may mar her for life.'

Poor Marian! what had she done? Mrs. Smith grew pale with indignation, and replied in tones expressive of a mother's injured feelings, 'Miss Temple, you certainly surprise me. Why should not my daughter play well, or why should an accomplishment for which you are admired, mar my girl for life?'

'Oh, Mrs. Smith, a thousand pardons; pray forgive me. I thought you said little Matty had fallen into the washing tub and been severely scalded; I am so stupid!'

'You are not usually thought so, Miss Temple,' replied the offended matron, turning to a more sympathetic lady seated next

her on the sofa. And Marian, scarcely refraining from a smile at her own awkward mistake, crossed the room to where Miss Brand was seated, fumbling with the boards of the domestic album. Taking a chair which stood vacant beside the elderly plain woman, the fair fashionable one said, with a sort of sigh, expressive of relief, 'Oh dear, what a comfort it is to see some one who is not the mother of ten children or thereby!'

'You don't, then, think little ones a blessing,' said Miss Brand, closing the album, and speaking in a tone almost grating.

Marian shrugged her shoulders in a way habitual with her, and said, 'Well, you know, they may be—that is to say, a few of them; but *ten* such blessings! Well, *chacun à son gout.* That is the favourite number, I do believe; and I have wounded that excellent woman's feelings most shockingly, and have made a perfect *pot pourri* of her family. Oh dear! oh dear! I feel I quite respect *you* now, Miss Brand.'

'And why?'

'Just because I feel that you have been mercifully exempted from becoming a mere social nuisance,—a nursery monomaniac.'

'Indeed! young lady, I think you take a very unequal view of the case, and talk in a very offensive manner. Children are certainly the gift of God, and as such are to be used.'

'I grant you that, Miss Brand; but not abused, as they are when they are made traps to catch the uninitiated. No, no: they may be meant as blessings; but to me, at least, they prove quite the reverse. I don't know, either, but it might be a good thing to have a lot of them; it would give one, to say the least, something to do. I have a good mind to adopt a large family of paupers.'

'And have you *nothing* to do?'

'Not much, certainly,' she answered bitterly; 'not much, if anything.'

'Don't you do *anything?*'

'Oh yes, I do a lot of things. I read German, and speak it—to the winds, who, sad to say, don't reply in that jaw-breaking language. I play, and sing, and embroider, and improve my mind; all of which varied employments do not an atom of good to any living creature, except it may be Miss Marian Temple.'

'Ah! and yet there are many useful things to be done even in Friarton, if I judge aright. Could not *you* also contrive to use your talents—your blessings, for the good of others less fortunate?'

'You mean visiting the poor, and that sort of thing?'

'Visiting the poor is one very good employment certainly.'

'Well, I hate it. I was once cajoled into accompanying an exemplary lady round her district. And oh, you cannot think what an ordeal those unhappy poor had to pass through! Taken to task upon the most minute item of household expenditure, and

lectured, and advised, and read to, and finally prayed with, in a manner to make one's hair stand on end! My face burned with shame at the indignities offered to them. If to visit the poor is to insult our fellow-creatures in their own houses, then I would earnestly pray to be kept from so employing *my* time.'

A cloud passed over the face of the elder lady as Marian concluded; it soon cleared away, however, and she said, with what was almost a kind smile, and in a gentler tone of voice than formerly, 'My dear young lady, you have got some strangely-mistaken ideas. You are talking from a prejudiced view of the question,—one too which, you will pardon me for saying, you are as yet but very slightly acquainted with. There are many men and women among the so-called poor to whom you could do much good, and who would gladly welcome you to their houses. The good you desire, however, will not be effected by following the example of your

friend; for here, in England, even a poor man's house is his castle, and no one has a right to thrust herself into the domestic arrangements of their houses. But sympathy and kind words will often go far to tempt back some who may be the victims less of sin than of heavy, heartbreaking want and sorrow. Sympathy is the grand password to all hearts, whether of rich or poor; that it is which makes the Saviour such a friend, because He knows it all, and can feel for us all in all our sorrows. Ah! my dear, we must not close up the doors of our hearts against helping our poor brother. It is the one work which God has given alike to every one to do—to help somebody.'

'Now, Miss Brand,' replied Marian, with an animated smile, 'I quite respect *your* opinions; but I have no notion of going into people's houses and torturing them with questions—questions which only lead them to practise deceit; for, of course, it cannot be expected that they are going to answer all

sorts of interrogations about things we have nothing to do with. I know very well, if any one were to come into my house and badger me in a similar manner, I should order them to be shown out of it as quickly as possible.'

Miss Brand smiled a little grim smile at the warmth displayed by her young companion, and added, 'There are works of usefulness connected with St. Paul's. Are you engaged in any of them?'

'Oh, no, no; I don't do any good,' was the answer.

'The sooner you begin the better, then, I should say,' rejoined Miss Brand. The entrance of the gentlemen, and Miss Temple's being invited to the piano, put an end to the conversation.

When Marian was alone in her chamber that night, she sat down with a feeling of weary dissatisfaction, and leaning her face on her hands, she said, 'It's all of no use; I shall never be good again. I should shut

myself up in a convent, for whenever I go into society, I forget—oh, Dorothy! Dorothy! sister mine, in heaven now!'—then she added bitterly, 'I do believe Miss Brand, with her plain features, and her old-fashioned gown, and her loving woman's soul, is a thrice happier person than I—I whose path is strewn with delicacies, and whose life is good for nothing.' She sat in the same position till the bright fire had burned low in the grate; and when at last she rose, there were traces of weeping visible on her very beautiful countenance. 'I would fain be like that old maid,' she added, with a sigh; and a line came into her mind, from that Book, with the contents of which she was well acquainted—'My grace is sufficient for thee.' Marian Temple knelt and asked God, as she had not asked for a long time, to give her the sufficient grace, not only to do good to his poor, but to be in her own living self good. And then the thought arose, what was it to *be* good? and the

answer came also from that Book: 'Pure religion, and undefiled, before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.' Although she spoke so disparagingly of herself, there was nevertheless many a poor family in Friarton, who had good cause to bless the generous hand of the young mistress of Templemore.

CHAPTER II.

'She never wore the orange flowers,
She never wore a ring;
And no one ever thought her fair,
For few can look within.'

ANON.

MR. BRAND, the new vicar of St. Paul's, Friarton, was not in the least like his aunt, in so far, at least, as met the eye. It is true that since his infancy there had devolved upon her the duty of his bringing up, and there was reflected in his character very much of what was excellent in her; and notwithstanding the marked dissimilarity betwixt them, she had succeeded in gaining a strong hold upon her nephew's affections.

Philip Brand's father was a country

surgeon, able and skilful, but of no celebrity beyond the small circuit of his own parish. He lost his wife when Philip, the youngest of his four children, was scarcely one year old; and upon the occurrence of that event, which rendered his children motherless, he summoned to his assistance his only sister, to supply as best she might the dead mother's place. Aunt Kate had never in all her life had any experience in the ways and wants of children, and in the new duties thrust upon her she not unfrequently found herself sorely pressed to know what to do among her nephews and nieces. To do what was best, was indeed what she aimed at; but it was difficult sometimes to know what was best. Had Miss Brand been a woman of a vacillating nature, she would in all probability have given in, and resigned her charge, thus forcing her brother into a second marriage. Clara, the eldest, a girl of twelve, was strong-minded and wayward, refusing to be controlled; Marcus, the

second, was altogether an unruly boy, trying the aunt's patience to the very verge of endurance; while Fanny, the third, was a delicate little thing, subject to fits, requiring more care than Miss Brand, with her other duties and her brother's small income, could well give her. Philip, however, was all her own, and had, from her first entrance into the household, clung to the strong, unpleasing woman with all the young tendrils of his little motherless nature. The babe, with his affectionate embraces and confiding love, atoned to her for much that was irksome in her new sphere. There is no denying that baby 'Phil' was Aunt Kate's pet; but the poor child was accustomed to petting, and passed through the fiery ordeal wonderfully little scathed.

The doctor's sister, however, was a good woman—a really good woman, which we take to mean a great deal more than a merely sentimentally pious female, who spends her time in reading religious books, attending

religious meetings, and practising district visiting, but who leaves her own house to shift for itself; the result too often being confusion and wrong. We take it to mean a practical, working, Christian woman, who faces difficulties, resolving in the strength of God to overcome them, provided always that these lions are encountered in the path of duty, and not sought for in the byeways and cross roads of life. And such was Miss Brand. 'It is a two-handed fight,' she used to say; 'and if I don't overcome them, they will overcome me; and that is what I don't mean they shall do.' So, as the Scotch proverb says, Miss Brand 'set a stout face to a stey brae,' reaching the top step by step, and ultimately controlling Clara, gaining as she did so the girl's esteem, not unmixed with a certain sort of affection. Marcus grew more tractable under the firmly held reins of his aunt; the puny Fanny was called home by the angel of death, when she was seven years old; while Phil,

as we know, never dreamt of resisting the firm but loving hand which guided him out of infancy, through the years of childhood, into that era which to a young man is called 'entering life.'

A woman of whom it might truly be said that her religion actuated her entire daily life, Aunt Kate's influence, as was to be expected, was not lost upon the children generally; but upon Philip, as her own peculiar boy, she strove most of all to impress the supreme importance of those principles which formed the main-spring by which her actions were guided. It had been her earnest prayer that the boy might be a good man, and, if God willed, devote his life to his service. Her much-cherished wishes were fulfilled, her prayers were answered, when at an early age Philip gave clear evidence of the work of God's Spirit in his soul, and, as he ripened in years, expressed his intention of entering into holy orders.

Just about this time Dr. Brand died. Marcus succeeded to his father's practice, and shortly afterwards married,—an example which Clara soon followed; thus leaving Aunt Kate and 'the boy,' alone in the world, at liberty to shape their own course, but with very limited means, and nothing beyond, with which to meet the expenses of the University education upon which Philip was preparing to enter at the time of his father's death. Aunt Kate, however, in the old spirit of *nil desperandum*, looked this new difficulty, too, broadly in the face, and finally stared it out of countenance, by means which don't concern you or me, reader. Aided of necessity by the youth's own honest, hard-working determination to succeed, she landed Philip high and dry, ready 'for orders,' a graduate of Cambridge; she, good woman, stinting herself, by a variety of womanly devices, to supply the wardrobe deficiencies of her boy. Philip entered the family of Lord Friarton as tutor to his

son, performing at the same time curate's duties in the chapel within the grounds of Villary Castle. In the course of time Mr. Seymour, vicar of St. Paul's, Friarton, died, when Lord Friarton presented the vacant living to his son's tutor, the Rev. Philip Brand. He had been installed in his office as vicar only about six weeks before the date of Mrs. Marleton's dinner party, and was consequently as yet almost a stranger in Friarton.

You may fancy the gladness of Aunt Kate's heart when Philip wrote to announce the good fortune which had befallen him in being appointed vicar of St. Paul's, Friarton. Now at last he was to have a house of his own, over which he invited his faithful old friend to preside. She demurred a little at being called to a fresh start in life; and her ten years of retirement were just ten years cut off from the good spinster's adaptability for polite society—not at any time a prominent characteristic among her many excellences.

But for Philip's sake she was willing to take her place in the world again; and it was with the good intention of doing him no social discredit that she had excavated from her repositories her best silk gown, which had lain entombed in linen and lavender since the date of her brother's death. And it was in this identical relic of a bygone fashion, with a cap which had last done duty at Clara's wedding, that Miss Brand, the new vicar's aunt, rashly precipitated herself into the bosom of that capricious chamelion, Society. The general voice was against her, and no wonder; for the person who proposed to enter polite life in a rusty brown silk and faded cap could not be otherwise than unpopular. Society wondered what could have induced the vicar to place such a queer old woman at the head of his domestic establishment, and not a few pious, well-intentioned young ladies recognised it as their duty to endeavour to terminate so unsuitable an arrangement as quickly as possible. These

good, every-day sort of people of Friarton, had no idea how much the accomplished, gentlemanly Philip Brand owed to the homely old woman in the rusty silk gown.

CHAPTER III.

'To be understood they must be visited.'—GUTHRIE.

A FEW days after that upon which our story commences, on a clear, bright, frosty morning in the early part of December, Marian, her brother, and Walter were seated at the breakfast table in Mr. Temple's house. He, as usual, sensible and proper, was reading that morning's *Times*, which duly came down by railway from the metropolis, to be in time to appear on the breakfast table at Templemore; while Marian and her cousin were in the midst of a disputation upon the relative merits of two new novels. Probably on this occasion the lady found herself defeated, as, rising, she said in

a slightly saucy tone, 'Well, Walter, I am weary to death of them all, and shall read no more novels this year.'

'Impossible! not for twenty-five days, Marian. You are laying too heavy a burden upon your soul.'

Marian, laughing brightly, looked over Melgund's shoulder, and said, 'I'm going to pay my *devoirs* to Miss Brand this morning; and Melgund, you must come along with me —wont you, dear? You have not yet called for the vicar.'

'I should have been delighted, my dear; only I must go up to town to-day, and, by the way, may not return for a couple of days.'

'In that case I shall go alone; I like that old lady.'

Melgund raised his eyebrows incredulously, and said, with his eyes still fixed on the columns of the newspaper, 'Do you indeed! Well, I should not have thought it. She appeared to me quite a homely and rather disagreeable person.'

'It must be upon the principle of extremes meeting, I fancy,' remarked Walter.

'Neither of you know anything whatever about the subject. Miss Brand strikes me as being just sufficiently removed out of the every-day rut of life to be interesting. She is, I am sure, a really good woman at heart; and I am going to see her this very day.'

'I, Marian Temple!' interposed Walter, with the slightest accent of sarcasm.

'Yes, I would rather be that homely old maid, with her antiquated gown and honest heart, than Marian Temple, whom the world professes to admire and make much of.'

'Then, my dear, my only comment is that you have a very extraordinary taste, in my opinion; and I for one am pleased that you have not your wish gratified, as you are vastly more to my liking. But by all means call for Miss Brand, and convey my apologies to the vicar,' remarked Melgund.

CHAPTER IV.

'The soul whose sight all-quick'ning grace renews,
Takes the resemblance of the good she views,
. . . . . .
Flies to save some, and feels a pang for all;
Herself as weak as her support is strong,
She feels that frailty she denied so long.'

COWPER.

GRATIFIED smile lighted up the plain countenance of the vicar's aunt when Miss Temple was announced. There seemed to be some unaccountable free-masonry in the hearts of these two women that attracted them to each other; for Miss Brand had many times thought with interest of the haughty beauty since they had last met, and it was with unfeigned satisfaction that she rose to welcome her young visitor.

'This is quite a little private visit to your-

self, Miss Brand,' Marian said. 'Melgund has gone to town, and cannot in consequence accompany me; but being determined not to put off one day more in coming to see you, I have laid aside the proprieties, and am here all alone.'

'And most happy I am to see you, my dear. We shall become better friends by and by, I trust.'

'I mean so, if you will allow me, Miss Brand. Melgund is the best of brothers; but he does not understand the longings of my heart. The blank places, you see, don't come into his theory of life.'

'And how should you suppose that I understand these longings?'

'Somehow I fancy you do. The fact is, I am weary and have nothing to interest me, no aim in life that does any good.'

'You wish, then, to do good, Miss Temple?'

'Oh yes; how much I should like to be of some use in this world, which needs a great deal of good done in it, does it not?'

'Yes, surely; and it is the doing of *little goods* which goes to make up the great deal. At the same time, my dear, there are two ways of doing good—one is good in itself, the other is evil.'

'How? Surely it is right at all times to be doing good.'

'Very true; but there is a way which proceeds from the undefined hope of somehow earning the favour of God by doing good to his creatures, making a sort of compromise with Him for neglecting the one thing which He especially names as our duty to do. This cannot be pleasing to God, because the source from which it proceeds is corrupt; and even the apparently good deeds of an unregenerate soul are evil, because the clean cannot come out of the unclean. But if good works are done as the natural outgoings of a heart which has got the love of God in it, that is the right way. Do you understand what I mean?'

'Oh yes; I have often felt the difference between being and doing good.'

'Yes; there is the working *for* salvation, which is one thing; and the working *from* salvation, which is another, and is very satisfying to the soul.'

'Satisfying! dear Miss Brand. It seems to me there is nothing but worry and disappointment in helping the poor.'

'So far you are correct; but it is not all disappointment. The greater part possibly is. But still the work is a good work when rightly gone about in the right spirit.'

'And that is—?'

'Faith. Doing from the heart, and doing earnestly and well "the works which God before ordained, that we should walk in them." It is satisfying. First get faith and love, and you will find plenty of outlets in the world.'

'Which is a very weary world.'

'Surely you are too young to have felt its weariness!'

'Alas! it is my nature, I fear, to feel not satisfied.'

'Perhaps you have never drawn water from the wells of salvation, of which, if a man drink, he shall never thirst again.'

'Sometimes I think,—no, I never have, it has been all a delusion; and yet, when I recall the past, I cannot believe that I did not once love my Saviour. My heart has grown cold, and the world has blighted the little germ of religion which once promised fair to blossom. I had a sister between Melgund and me, Miss Brand, who was very, *very* good; and while she lived I tried to serve God. But then she died, as all the best ones do—you know

"The best, the noblest, sweetest,
Are always first to go,"—

and left me to struggle on alone; and oh! I have not been victorious in the fight.'

'Did you apply for strength at the Fountainhead, my dear?'

'I prayed, oh yes, often and often; but

then I forgot to watch, and the result, you see, has not been satisfactory. I was well nigh giving in altogether, when your remarks the other evening somehow touched a long silent chord in my heart, which seemed to waken up and whisper, "Go on; my grace is sufficient for you." You will help me, won't you?'

'Indeed, my child, I will, if I can; but this matter must be between God and yourself. "His grace," as you will find, "is sufficient for you." Carry all your trouble, your anxiety, your temptations, to Him, and leave them there; and you will, I venture to say, have more satisfaction even in the world than you have ever had,—I mean less of anxious care, and not that the world should prove a satisfying portion for you. God forbid!'

The entrance of other visitors put a stop to this conversation. Marian soon after rose to take leave, and Miss Brand, pressing her hand at parting, whispered, 'Come soon

again, and see what an old woman can do for you.'

On her return home, Marian sought the retirement of her own chamber, and there poured out the burden of her soul to Him who of late had been a 'God not sought after,' and dedicated herself afresh to his service, with a fuller purpose of heart than she had ever previously done. When she had done so, there seemed to come in upon her spirit a calm which had been a stranger to her while seeking to banish care, and silence the pleadings of conscience, by the amusements and social amenities of the world, which is different from enjoying the world as part of the good things which our Father has given us, sanctified to us by his Son. Even now Marian somewhat realized the distinction of living for God in the world, and living in the world to get rid of God.

CHAPTER V.

'Where is the blessedness I knew,
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and his word?'

COWPER.

'Who leads us with a gentle hand
Thither, O thither,
Into the Silent Land!'

LONGFELLOW.

MR. TEMPLE, the father of the present Temples of Templemore, had inherited from his father a small property, which had been in the family from the time of the first Charles, or thereabout; but not contented with the moderate income afforded him by the paternal acres, he had engaged in business in his native town, and at the time of his death his name stood at

the head of the principal mercantile firm in Friarton, which, albeit but a small county town, was somewhat important in a commercial point of view. At his death, which happened ten years ago, his only son, Melgund, succeeded his father in the firm, as well as in the family estate, and inherited besides a considerable sum of money in the funds; whilst to Marian and her elder sister Dorothy, their father had left a fortune of ten thousand pounds each. Dorothy had died several years ago, and her sister, dividing her property with Melgund, was now the greatest heiress as well as the most handsome young lady in Friarton. At the time of our story she was nearly five-and-twenty, and had as yet steadily declined the numerous suitors whom her united attractions brought to her feet. To say the truth, the young lady herself was strangely indifferent in the matter of personal appearance and feminine charms in general; treating the admiration lavished on her much as one

would do a stone at one's foot. It is quite possible that had such worship been withheld, as in her case it was not likely to be, the beauty might then have felt herself very seriously aggrieved. Whether or not the case was exactly as she had stated it to Miss Brand; Marian Temple, the favourite of fortune, was nevertheless weary and dissatisfied. The sort of female despotism which, as a beauty and an heiress, she wielded over all about her, had tended to develop the little natural asperity of her temper; and the round of social gaieties which she entered into,—despising them all the time, as she assuredly did despise them,—had been sapping the foundations of that spiritual life which was hid somewhere in her soul, and which, in Dorothy's lifetime, had shone out not inconspicuously. Those who knew anything of this inner life of hers had been bitterly disappointed, but no one half so bitterly as had Marian herself; and it was this suppressed feeling of disappointment

with her own heart, acting upon a spirit naturally earnest and buoyant, that was producing the unhealthy dissatisfaction and weariness of the world of which she complained. For it was not merely sentimental talk, but real heart weariness that Marian experienced when she told Miss Brand that it was a 'weary world.'

Causes there had been of late to waken in Marian's mind some of the old devotional feeling, and to repel her more and more from the hold which the world was fast gaining on her heart. First of all, the new vicar's sermons had been of a different tone from those of old Mr. Seymour, his predecessor, whose code of teaching had been 'to live and let live.' Mr. Brand's preaching of simple gospel truths suggested much earnest longing in the breast of at least one of his hearers. When he had spoken of the inner life of the Christian, the higher and spiritual life, which lay hid with Christ in God, Miss Temple had begun to marvel if this

lost life, which she had thought at one time to be hers, could indeed be hid there in the bosom of the Father; if so, she knew that it was safe, and she might yet be alive, not dead, if God's Spirit would breathe upon the dry bones. But evermore the thought would come with renewed force to her mind, that the golden thread of her life had been lost, and should she ever be able to find it? Then the startled cry of her awakened soul was, 'I am not safe!' But the whispered response from the Spirit of God came like a fresh wind to the desert, 'Yes, safe; for is not your life hid with Christ?' Still her mind had wandered in darkness and confusion till she met the vicar's aunt and listened to her earnest words. Then had there beamed in upon Marian's soul some glimpses of the old truths she used to know and love when Dorothy had been alive. She seemed to have caught hold of the lost thread; and determined, with the help of God, never again to let it slip from her grasp.

Nearly a week had elapsed since the date of Marian's visit at the vicarage, and she had waited, expectant, each day since for the appearance of Miss Brand to return it, according to the due requirements of etiquette in Friarton as elsewhere. Perhaps the old lady was not *au fait* in etiquette. From that or some other cause Miss Temple's visit was as yet unreturned. In the meantime Marian, sitting day by day in her elegant, well-appointed private room, eager for the appearance of the homely old woman from the vicarage, formed many pleasant plans of usefulness, to be carried out in the future under the direction of her new friend. She was impatient under the disappointment of Miss Brand's apparent want of politeness, and almost made up her mind to set aside the petty ceremonies of Friarton and elsewhere, and repeat her visit to the vicarage.

It was winter; hard frost, accompanied by several heavy falls of snow prevailing for

several days, had sealed up the outer world in an icy mantle of pure white. Very lovely it looked as Miss Temple gazed from her window out upon the park of Templemore, and beyond it, along the road, out across the open plain, with the hill of Minton Peak in the distance. A very fair scene, we say, was God's earth on that bright winter day, and one to lift the thoughts of our heroine up from the transient *comme il faut* of society. It was in truth bitter weather, making the comfortable halls and warm fires of the rich very inviting; and causing the shivering poor, with their scant clothing and tiny smouldering fires, to draw closer to one another, as if by doing so the monster cold must be kept at a distance. It promised to be a severe winter. Those sage persons the weather prophets had said so, had predicted, by some foreknowledge of their own, an unprecedented continuance of cold and storm. But it needed no prophet to tell that, alike for the working classes and the houseless

poor, hardships and struggles were in prospect. The markets told that; and the scarcity of work added yet another argument to the already too apparent fact.

In these circumstances the hearts of the benevolent began to devise schemes for relieving the sufferers outside. Good active ladies were on the *qui vive*, each with her own pet measure, some of them impossible both in theory and practice, others excellent in both; while, again, some were half the one, half the other; but all alike dear to the fair deviser. Time would fail me to tell of all that the Friarton ladies proposed, seconded, and finally failed to put in execution, for the benefit of their fellow-creatures during the earlier weeks of December 18—. Suffice it to say that the old, threadbare, every-day sort of thing was at length pitched upon, as the best mode of affording tangible assistance to those in want of help,—a 'Soup Kitchen and Blanket Society.' In this laudable

scheme they agreed to merge their differences, and they plunged heart and hand into the 'Soup Kitchen and Blanket Society.' At the head of the list of the committee of management, or very near it, stood, as was to be expected, the name of Mrs. Moses Reddie, the same worthy woman in whose company Miss Temple made her first essay at 'district visiting.' A very excellent person was Mrs. Moses Reddie, and one of the most active public ladies in Friarton; not that I mean to hint that she, good woman, had been idle at home, for she had already presented her grateful husband with some seven or eight little Reddies.

She was an individual whose noble mind soared above such minor trifles as kitchen and pantry, darning stockings and making pies. Mrs. Moses Reddie was the authoress of several very small books, on benevolent subjects; but it was doubtful if she understood the practice of one of its fundamental rules, 'that charity begins at home.' She was

bent on reforming the social condition of the masses, and doing so by sheer persistency or overpowering force of will. Notwithstanding that her efforts were well meant, we regret to say that as yet they had not met with such success as they were entitled to. An ungrateful public were disposed to accord but scant justice to Mrs. Reddie, and to throw impertinent hints about sweeping before one's own door.

In the earlier part of her career she, as Miss Clifton, had kept a ladies' school in Friarton. At this school Marian had been a pupil for a short time, and in her her late preceptress had not ceased to evince unabated interest. Miss Clifton subsequently married Mr. Moses Reddie, a quiet, simple man, head clerk in a large public work. Seven or eight children had been the fruit of this union, whose pale hungry faces and large eyes seemed to make a mute appeal to be allowed to share in their very active mother's activities.

One of the first houses to which this lady directed her steps, in order to carry out the benevolent designs of the new 'Soup Kitchen and Blanket Society,' was that of Miss Temple. She was announced one forenoon, as Marian sat mapping out in her mind's eye some brighter, happier, because better employed days, than any she had for some time enjoyed.

The first greetings over, Mrs. Reddie plunged at once into the object of her visit.

'Now, my dear Miss Marian,'—Mrs. Reddie always called her Miss Marian,—'I have come on an errand of mercy, to solicit your co-operation.'

'My co-operation, Mrs. Reddie! In what? You are aware I am not one of the active ladies.'

'Well, my dear, I know that; but you ought to be. With your time and resources, you ought to see it your duty to devote a part of your time to labouring in the interests of religion and benevolent objects;

and here, Miss Marian, is an object upon which you may well expend a part of your energies.'

'What is the object, may I ask, in the first place, before I dispose of my energies in its behalf?'

'Well, you must know, my dear, that the prospects for the poor this winter are most distressing—work scarce, weather unprecedentedly cold, provisions unprecedentedly high, and everything, in fact, against them. Already the scenes of want are heartrending.'

'Dear, dear, how sad! If I can do anything, I shall be most happy,' interposed Marian.

'I'm just coming to that, my dear. We are going to set on foot a "Soup Kitchen and Blanket Society." It will be of immense service to the people, who, from their thriftless habits, never have a penny to fall back upon—that is to say, if it is rightly managed,' added Mrs. Reddie in a dubious tone.

'I am rejoiced to hear that something is to be done for these poor people.'

'Ah yes, dear Miss Marian, the rich must help their poorer neighbours. But I wish you to co-operate with us, and to take a district.'

'Oh no, no. Anything but that, Mrs. Reddie.'

'Ah, but you must see how necessary it is—absolutely necessary, I should say—to ascertain who really are in want of assistance. For unless it is to be properly managed, it will do more harm than good. Every one of them will be coming clamouring for assistance, which will never do, and must, if possible, be avoided. And with this view we are going to allot the town into districts, and we wish *lady visitors* to go into every house, and find out who is in want and who is not. You understand?'

'Indeed, Mrs. Reddie, I cannot undertake a task for which I am so signally unfit.'

'You will never be fitted until you try.

Lay your modest scruples aside, and you will do admirably, Miss Marian.'

'I shall never do admirably for such work. It may be all very true what you say, that one ought to do something; but surely it is equally true that different persons have different gifts—and that is not mine. I think it hateful and impertinent to go prying into people's houses, or else to rush upon them like a whirlwind, assailing them with cross-questions as to the details of their poor little domestic arrangements —and this simply because they happen to be poor. No. I will gladly give you money, but must decline to co-operate in the way you ask me.'

'Oh, Marian, Marian, my dear girl, I wish I could see you devoting your precious talents to the glory of God, and not frittering them away on "trifles light as air!"'

'It is kind in you to take so much interest in me, I am sure; but my precious talents (as you are pleased to style them) are not

to be at the disposal of the Soup Kitchen and Blanket Society. Here are five pounds, however, which you will find greatly more to the purpose.'

'Money is, of course, most acceptable; but I would prefer having your personal influence,' answered the ungrateful Mrs. Reddie, depositing, however, as she spoke, the money in her reticule. 'Indeed, my dear, I would again press you to co-operate in this good work,' continued the persistent matron.

'I assure you, Mrs. Reddie, it will not make the pot boil, whereas the money will.'

Just at this moment Walter entered the room unannounced, but drew back on perceiving that his cousin was not alone. Mrs. Reddie, however, being a person of signal energy, recognised in him a fit subject to attack upon the point uppermost in her thoughts. 'How d'ye do, Mr. Walter? I have just been begging for the new soup kitchen, you see.'

'And have you been successful in your appeal? I hope so.'

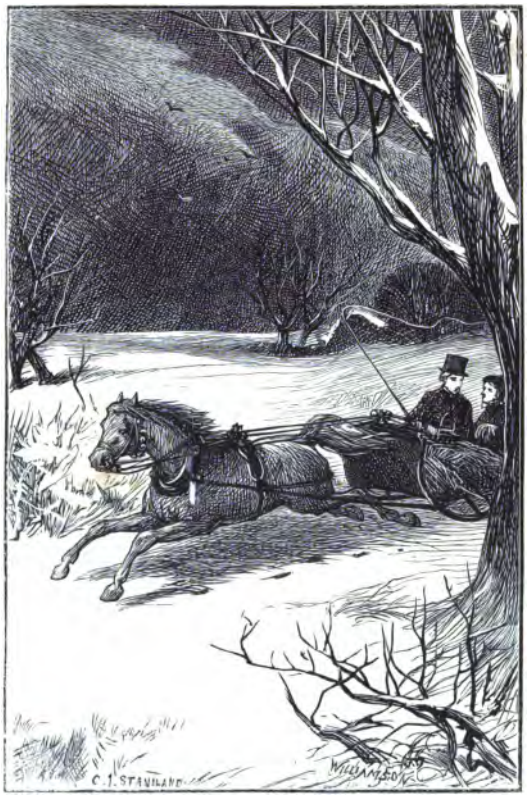
'Oh yes, so far as money goes; but I cannot prevail upon Marian to co-operate.'

'Oh, Miss Temple is not a public character, Mrs. Reddie. Can't you make soup without her assistance? I suspect mutton broth is not her *forte*.'

'Now, now, Mr. Walter, you are incorrigible. But you will give me *your* subscription, won't you?'

'Too late, too late, Mrs. Reddie; I have had at least half-a-dozen applications already. The good people of Friarton seem to be spreading themselves like locusts. Marian,' he said, addressing his cousin, 'my sledge is at the door; will you drive with me to Lurly? Barnes is ill again, and his wife writes me a doleful epistle. As we have not a moment to lose, perhaps Mrs. Reddie will excuse you.'

On this broad hint the visitor took leave, and Miss Temple soon returned, enveloped



MARIAN'S DRIVE WITH WALTER TO LURLY,
—*Page* 63.

in the most costly furs, and, in Walter's well-appointed sledge, was soon clear of the streets. Cutting across the fine open country, with the frozen snow crackling beneath the horse's feet, and the bright blue sky above them, they forgot for the moment, probably, that either poverty or soup kitchens existed in the dingy town behind them.

Lurly, Walter Temple's country house, was about seven miles from Friarton. Barnes was a useless sort of fellow, who had married Walter's old nurse, and had now a cottage, and sometimes employment on the grounds, but was, nevertheless, almost never free from the cry of poverty, while his wife's former nursling was frequently called on to supply the wants of her household. On this occasion Sally was in real trouble. Barnes was ill of rheumatic fever, and their eldest daughter had come home from service threatened with consumption, and hence the need of Mr. Temple's present visit.

'How delightful this beautiful country is to-day, Walter!' said Marian, as they rapidly drove along the road to Lurly, in its white robe sparkling with diamonds. 'I quite enjoy this clear cold frost; one is apt to forget how bitter it is for those who, unlike us, are cold and hungry.'

'True, it must be miserable for many just now, Marian.'

'Indeed, Walter, I don't think we do half enough for our poor neighbours.'

'You do a good deal, I think.'

'Indeed no. I am ashamed to think how self-indulgent I am.'

'And yet you refused to *co-operate*. How inconsistent of my fair cousin!'

'That dreadful woman! I almost lost my temper with her.'

('How I wish you had, and had never found it again.')

'You just came in time to keep me out of trouble. It is, I fear, impossible for me to refrain from speaking my mind.'

'Much better speak your own than some other person's. All the same, you do display a considerable degree of asperity upon some occasions.'

'Yes, far too much; and the provoking thing is that my transgressions in this respect only keep pace with my good resolutions. I am very wicked. And are we not very worldly, you and I, Walter?'

'Too much so. I often wonder what Dorothy would have said, could she see us now.'

'She does see us. Oh, don't say otherwise. I could not bear to think she was debarred from watching over us—over those she loved so dearly, and who love her still, although we vex her.'

Walter was silent for a few minutes, and then said, 'Oh, Marian, how good she was, and how we loved each other!' It has been a weary, dreary strife to me since

"She arose and went her way."

'The Christian life seemed easy, with her

to mark the way; but now it is, as you say, a struggle, in which I at least am too often overcome. I believe God took her, that we might learn to lean more upon his own teaching and his own guidance.'

'Shall we ever attain to be like her, Marian?'

'Not here. But yonder, shall we not? Oh, Walter, I wish we could both begin anew to try and be like her here. The gaieties and pleasures of the world, even the small world of Friarton, are dissipating and dissatisfying. Don't you feel them so?'

'Yes, dear, I do. But, of course, we cannot shut ourselves up like oysters, and refuse to "co-operate" with our fellow-creatures.'

'Oh no, not that exactly; but I do think we might do more for the poor part of them, and let the rich and flourishing take care of themselves. We can still eat of their dainties, and give them dainties in return, you know.'

'That clause in the new Reform Bill is excellent. What next, Marian? Are you also going to develop into a Mrs. Moses Reddie?'

'No, never. But I have found out that the real secret of success in charitable life is first to be good one's self, and then work for God is sure to follow, and happiness in its train—a better kind of it, too, than that afforded by the evanescent pleasures of the world.'

'I suppose you are about right, Marian. First love God, and then your neighbour—that is near to being truly religious. But my little cousin must not walk in the track of Mrs. Reddie.'

'You know as well as I do that can never be.'

'I do believe it *is* impossible. But here we are at Lurly, and there is Sally herself.'

Mrs. Barnes, as the sledge approached, came forward with many demonstrations of delight.

'Now, Mister Walter, this *is* kind; and my old man's took very bad indeed. Bless me! it's Miss Temple; and me so took up with the young master not to see you. Come in, Miss; it's but a poor place, but you're welcome. Oh, Mister Walter, I'm a great trouble to you; but you see as how Barnes he's been out of work for nigh six weeks, and this rheumatiz is very hard upon a body. And Matty, poor lass, she's bad with the cough,' added Sally, with a touch of tenderness in her voice, which had not been visible when talking of her husband.

'And what is wanted, Sally?' asked Walter.

'Bless your kind heart! Most everything's wanted. Though I be's ashamed to stand and tell you, Mister Walter, I have not a shilling in the house,' added the poor woman, wiping her eyes with a corner of her apron.

The fact is, Sally's marriage had been a mistake, and she had nearly lost heart among the troubles which, but for Walter Temple's

frequent relief, would have landed both Sally and her husband in the workhouse long ago.

Meanwhile Miss Temple had entered the cottage, and was talking kindly to the sick girl seated on the chair by the side of the fire. A small comfortless fire it looked to Marian on that bitter winter's day, as she made friendly inquiries as to what the doctor had prescribed for the invalids.

'You see, Miss,' said the girl, 'the doctor orders a lot of things that poor folk like us don't get easy; but I've most things I need too; only mother is worried now and then. It has been a sore vex that I had to leave my situation when father's so bad, and unable to work, Miss.'

'Sad indeed, Matty, and I am very sure that you feel it so; but you must not vex yourself, my girl. I remember well how good you used to be to me, and how you used to help me to dress my big doll long ago, when I had been at Lurly to see Aunt Fanny. And now you must allow me to be good to you in

my turn. God in his providence has given me a great deal more than He has you, but He has also told us to bear one another's burdens. So, till you are able to be about again, I shall see to what you require, and you must not refuse me, Matty.'

'Oh, Miss, you're very good, and God will reward you. Thank you all the same; but I don't think as I shall ever be about again. Only I should not like mother to know this. She has enough of troubles without that one.'

'I trust you are not so ill as you think; and that, with proper care and nourishing food, you will be all right again.'

'As God wills, Miss. But I don't think as I'll ever be better.'

'I shall ask Dr. Bennet to drive out and see you, Matty, and we shall be guided by his opinion of your case.'

'Thank you kindly, Miss.'

'Don't you feel the cottage cold in this weather, Matty?' asked Miss Temple, giving

an involuntary shiver, as she looked at the small fire in the grate.

'Well,' Miss, it is not so warm as I was used to when in service; but I have many comforts, and I don't feel the cold very much.'

'A thought has occurred to me, Matty, Suppose you come in and stay for a week or two at Templemore. There we shall have Dr. Bennet quite at hand, and the house is warmer. Besides, your mother has her hands full just now while Barnes is so ill. So we shall consider that as part of the command, "Bear ye one another's burdens." I shall send out for you to-morrow, if you can be ready by then.'

'Oh, thank you, thank you, Miss Marian; I'm sure you are far too good. I shall never be able to thank you enough; but—'

'No—no *buts*, Matty. When you get stronger, which I hope may be soon, we shall find some work for you to do.'

'God bless you, Miss! Indeed mother has

more than enough to do one way and another,' said Matty, wiping her eyes, into which the tears had sprung, touched by the timely kindness of Miss Temple.

'There, it is all settled; now I hear Mr. Walter calling me to make haste before darkness overtakes us. Good-bye, Matty; good-bye, Sally;' and she left in the hand of the latter a bit of gold, which lighted up the face of the burdened woman with a smile, but rarely seen on it now-a-days. She assisted to tuck the young lady beneath the furs, chattering all the while, alternately about her troubles and her gratitude. But when Walter cracked his whip, and *Tom* at the sound pricked his ears and pranced gaily forward, she continued talking to herself, now of Marian's benevolence, and then of the suitableness of the young Master of Lurly and his cousin to each other, followed with lamentations over the fate of 'poor Miss Dolly who was such a sweet, good Miss.'

This last topic recalled her own evils,

especially her daughter's illness, threatening as it did to end as Dolly's had done. Martha was the only surviving daughter of a family of seven. Other two girls there had been, both of whom had died from consumption; and therefore poor Sally had a tugging at her heart when the short cough caught her anxious ear, on re-entering the cottage. She said nothing, but suppressing a heavy sigh made preparations for tea; and it was while partaking of this humble meal that Matty related to her mother the conversation which had passed between her and their visitor. 'Thank the Lord!' was the mother's first exclamation, as the unhidden tears rushed to her eyes. 'Thank the Lord! For I did think ye were to be lost for want of right taking care of, Matty, and to go as the rest did! But now Miss Marian (God bless her) will see you want for nothing. The doctor said, "Mrs. Barnes," said he, "it's nourishment and keeping up she needs; and she'll be all right." "But, doctor," says I, "where

are poor folk like me to get them good things?" But now you'll get everything that money and a kind heart can give you;' and the mother trotted off to relate to her husband the bit of good fortune that had fallen to their daughter, who meanwhile set about such preparation as her simple wardrobe afforded for change of residence, while Marian and her cousin reached Templemore in safety, well satisfied with the result of their call at Lurly.

CHAPTER VI.

'Somewhat back from the village street
Stands the old-fashioned country-seat.
Across its antique portico
Tall poplar trees their shadow throw,
And from its station in the hall,
An ancient timepiece says to all,
"For ever—never,
Never—for ever."'—LONGFELLOW.

AT the period of our story, Templemore was only a house in one of the streets of Friarton. The entrance was by a large, rather ancestral-looking iron gate, having on either side of it a stone pillar topped by a sphinx; and the house was surrounded on three sides by a park in which still stood some old trees, the remains of former days, when it had been a country

'Miss Brand is, I have no doubt, a most estimable person in her way; but what there can be about her to prove attractive to you, puzzles me not a little. It appears to me indeed quite ludicrous.'

'May be so. Nevertheless I like Miss Brand, and mean that you shall do so too.'

'*Chacun à son gout*, my dear; but I suspect your wishes in this respect will scarcely be found practicable.'

'I tell you what it is, Melgund, I'm weary of all this namby-pamby useless life we are living. We are as worldly as if we were to live here for ever.'

'I'm sure, my love, *you* are not worldly.'

'Indeed I am, though; steeped to the eyebrows in selfishness and worldliness, till I am disgusted with myself.'

'I should not like to contradict you, Marian, but I am free to own that I think you are mistaken. If worldliness means that you dress well, sing well, and are probably the best-looking girl in Friarton, then

possibly your self-accusation is just. But that you are selfish I positively deny. You are the most unselfish little puss in the world. So now go and sing me one of your German ballads.'

'Dearest Melgund, you may not, it is true, think me selfish towards you; but oh, how terribly so we all are towards God!'

'How so, my girl? You are getting out of my soundings now.'

'God, who gives us all, asks only one thing in return; and that we steadily refuse to give. Is it not selfish that we should take so much, and give so little?'

'As you put it, it sounds so; but what is it you withhold?'

'He asks only our hearts; and that, I fear, I am giving to the world. Oh, my own brother, it is very unsatisfactory living thus for self-gratification!'

'My love, you are growing gloomy. If you are dissatisfied here, why not try somewhere else? Should you like to spend the

rest of the season in town? If so, Aunt Kingly will be charmed to have you as a visitor,' answered Melgund; proving how true had been her words when she said that, though the best of brothers, he did not understand in the very least the more earnest nature of his sister.

'No, Melgund,' replied Marian; 'I don't desire a change of abode, only to live better in our own dear home. I have been thinking much of Dorothy to-day, and how different we should all have been had she remained with us—at least how different I should have been—and poor Walter!'

'And why am poor I to be excluded?'

'Not excluded, dear; but you never came so much under her beautiful influence. But that is all past, and we must each live by ourselves. Miss Brand has a mind of the same stamp as Dorothy's.'

'Mind alone, I think; for her external belongings are curiously unlike. But, my love, pursue any mode of life you choose,

always provided you don't develop into a Mrs. Reddie.'

Marian laughed, and going to the piano sang several of her brother's favourite songs; and ere she rose from the instrument, he had, I have no doubt, entirely forgotten the serious nature of the previous conversation. He was a highly estimable member of society, partaking, it may be, just a little of the character of the elder son in the parable.

CHAPTER VII.

'Nor do the old stumps of a forest, still standing up erect beneath the sea-wave, indicate a greater change, a deeper subsidence, than the relics of ancient grandeur and the touching memorials of piety which yet linger about these wretched dwellings, like evening twilight on the hills—like some traces of beauty in a corpse.'

DR. GUTHRIE.

PHILIP Brand, in becoming vicar of St. Paul's, accepted the charge or care of at least three thousand souls, and he felt deeply impressed with the weighty responsibility which now rested on him as minister of so large a parish. Feeling all this, he desired, with a good deal of his aunt's unflinching courage, to do faithfully the duties of his situation; and with the newly kindled zeal of a young apostle, en-

tered heart and soul upon his work. He commenced it by devoting three or four days of each week to the work of visiting in the parish, intending by this plan to visit all his parishioners. Now, the parish of St. Paul's, Friarton, embraced within its extensive bounds the oldest and most degraded, as well as some of the most fashionable and exclusive parts of the town. It was the new vicar's earnest wish to give as large a share of attention to the former as to the latter class; and with this view he allotted two days weekly to be devoted to the degraded, and two to the aristocratic or well-conducted. Among the latter, as a matter of course, he met with just such a reception as a well-bred accomplished parish clergyman might expect. His visits to the handsome villas and streets of Friarton, *West End*, were followed by a series of invitations to dinner or evening parties, and these in their turn by a vast number of pairs of slippers, and other elegances of feminine workmanship—the

quaint old library in the vicarage assuming very much the appearance of a 'fancy fair' by and by. All of which attentions were not ungrateful to the young vicar, as you, my reader, will readily believe.

Among the lanes and back streets, forming by far the greater portion of the parish, the reception Mr. Brand had to encounter was signally different from that which he met in the other portion. As house after house was entered, and the inmates found to be in a state of heathenism, uneducated, and in not a few instances sunk by their own vices in wretched poverty and misery of the worst description, the vicar stood aghast, appalled at the contemplation of the burden resting on him, as having indeed the charge of these souls, for whom hitherto it appeared no man had cared. How this fetid, seething mass of ignorance and vice was to be met and grappled with, became now the question chiefly forcing itself upon his mind for solution. Certainly it could not be done single-

handed. One man was powerless against this army of sin. The fair dreams of usefulness which he had cherished seemed hourly fading before the increasing host of sad realities every day meeting his eye. The goal to be reached was day by day receding. He could grasp at nothing, where everything was dark around. What could his poor, puny strength do, however well meant his efforts? They could accomplish nothing; and the want coming powerfully before him was that which has now become almost a hackneyed phrase, namely, 'organization.' Yes; the men and women of Friarton must put their well-conducted shoulders to the wheel, and try to break up this awfully fallow ground.

After the first month or two, the scenes and sins and sorrows he encountered in the one part of his parish brought to an abrupt pause his visits in the other. With their dinner parties and trifling amusements his spirit at that period had little sympathy.

The churchwardens were not helpful. A blank stare, or a refusal as blank, was generally all that he met with from these excellent functionaries, who were men that, *speaking metaphorically*, it might have required the powerful action of a fire-engine to arouse from their conservatism to see the significance of the word 'aggression,' as applied to the social condition of Friars' Alley. Jacob Millings, the chandler, the oldest member among that august body, took the following view, which was seconded by a majority of his colleagues:—

'Why,' said he, 'the parish ain't no worse nor it were, and we ne'er heard of such new-fangled doings. Heart alive, you'll never make no better of them lots down in the lanes. Bless you, sir, they be's no better nor heathens.' It was quite true the latter part of Jacob Millings' statement. But he and his brethren in office saw no need for missions at home, although they probably subscribed to the Church Missionary Society.

It is difficult to put in practice the good old rule, 'Let every man sweep before his own door.'

For the most part, the people attending St. Paul's were exemplary persons, who would scrupulously have avoided the contaminating influences of those lanes and back streets, which were every day chilling the heart and paling the cheek of their parish clergyman.

Palmer's Court, Friars' Alley, was in St. Paul's parish; and on arriving at this point, the brave spirit of the vicar nearly sank, a blank feeling of despair taking hold of him. It was in itself rather a remarkable and quite historical locality. In former times, when Friarton was strictly ecclesiastical, and when the only buildings in the place were religious houses connected with the abbey, the ruins of which now formed the most attractive *lion* in the neighbourhood, there had stood, enclosed by high walls, shut in with stout iron-studded gates, and with all the other para-

phernalia of the monkish age in which it flourished, a certain monastery. Here in the good old days 'monks had made good cheer,' and here tradition said some very dark deeds both of cruelty and deceit had been perpetrated,—deeds which to this day would cause good Protestant hair to stand on end. Like other places of a similar character, it had been depopulated at the time of the Reformation, when on a certain day its gates were thrown open, and the frightened sisters and shaven brotherhood were driven forth like deer. As the old monastic town gradually changed its character, and grew into commercial importance, the ancient monastery had, step by step, fallen into decay, passing from its former glory, until now, in the middle of the nineteenth century, known as Palmer's Court, it had become the very lowest locality in Friarton, distinguished more by its present degradation than by its former pride. It was peopled by a dense mass of human beings, crowded into all its

old dormitories and turret chambers. It was quite a little world of its own, Friars' Alley. Here congregated the thieves, beggars, costermongers, and other 'waifs and strays,' with a small sprinkling of working people, driven hither by stress of weather,—they who from various causes, sickness or sin, had become merged in that class called now-a-days the 'lapsed masses.' Children swarmed like bees here. There were children everywhere: children on the street; children in the court; children on the stairs; children in every room. Where are their parents? was Mr. Brand's astonished self-interrogation; or have they fallen from the clouds? The truth is, that during the day there were scarcely any other inhabitants. They were the lawful offspring of the denizens of the place, who, earning a precarious livelihood by costering and similar professions, left the rising generation to take care of themselves and younger brothers or sisters, while they pursued their own

avocations until nightfall, when they returned to the somewhat dubious comforts of Friars' Alley.

The vicar made repeated efforts to engage members of this juvenile race in conversation, but was met either with loose ribald insolence, or an utterly dogged stupidity nearly as bad. Scarcely one amongst them knew that there was a God in heaven above, and were only acquainted with his name from the vocabulary of oaths with which their ears were already too familiar. It is not to be wondered at, then, that the young apostle, 'vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked,' was awe-struck, returning day by day from his encounter with these hosts, wearing such a look of pain on his countenance, that his aunt naturally grew anxious in her turn as to the cause.

Entering one day one of the innumerable rooms in Palmer's Court, Mr. Brand found it tenanted by only a little boy. He was

lying huddled together on a handful of dirty straw as an apology for a bed, before an empty hearth from which every spark of fire had long since disappeared. There was an expression as of pain on the little pinched face, which, along with the squalid aspect of the apartment, betokened much outward misery.

'Well, my little fellow,' said the vicar, 'what is your name?'

'I ha'n't got none, as I knows on leastways,' was the discouraging reply.

'They call you something, don't they? What is it? Come now, try if you can tell me that,' asked the visitor coaxingly.

'They calls me Blacking.'

'Really now, is that your name—Blacking?'

'Not as I knows on. I ha'n't got none.'

'What is your father's name? can you tell me that?'

'Ha'n't got none. Never had, as I knows on.'

'Your mother's then? Have you not got a mother, my poor little fellow?'

'No; I should think not,' he replied, with a sardonic laugh which grated horribly, proceeding from one so young.

'Why are you called Blacking, then, my child?'

''Cos I sells blacking; but I sells nothing now, 'cos I's ill, and they calls me only bad names as I brings in nothing.'

'Who do you mean by *they?*'

'Wilkins, and the rest on 'em.

'Are you hungry, my boy?'

The sick eye lighted up, and half raising himself from his miserable pallet, the poor outcast said eagerly, 'Lord, and I be's that, your honour! Ha' you anything to give me to eat? I ha'n't tasted a morsel this day,' and his little starved features and hungry eyes endorsed the truth of his words. Mr. Brand was not long in finding something to supply the poor child's abject need; and thus, having gained so far his good graces, he asked him if he would not go to the hospital.

'Not if I knows it,' was the boy's ready reply.

'Think again. There you would have plenty to eat, and the doctors and nurses to take care of you,' urged the vicar.

'Lor' bless you, sir, I'm 'appy here when I gets summat to eat. No, thank your honour, I'm not going to no 'ospitals.'

This is merely quoted as an example of Mr. Brand's experience among the swarms of urchins in Friars' Alley. There were plenty of similar cases, telling in emphatic language of ignorance, want, and degradation. There was one unfailing friend from whom Mr. Brand was certain of meeting with both sympathy and advice regarding the exigencies of his parish, especially Friars' Alley, with its horde of home heathens. This friend in council was Miss Brand, whom the smart young ladies and fast young gentlemen of Friarton were disposed to regard as an *old bore*, with whom the agreeable vicar was unfortunately encumbered—a sort of

moral mortgage on his income and attention, not to be easily got quit of. To his aunt, then, it was that he carried his report of the lapsed condition of the denizens of Friars' Alley.

She promised to think over the subject, and meantime exhorted him to persevere in his laudable efforts at excavation.

CHAPTER VIII.

'To be felt they must be seen.'

MISS BRAND was as good as her word, and gave to the subject of Friars' Alley her earnest attention, and, in addition, insisted upon penetrating in her own proper person into the very heart of the enemy's camp, in order to ascertain its weak points, its open lines, its unprotected outposts, before deciding on the course of action to be adopted. Her countenance wore rather a discouraging aspect, when she found herself once more walking by her nephew's side, in the open street, — open indeed it seemed to them after the close atmosphere of Friars' Alley. At the corner of an adjacent street, Mr. Brand and his

companion parted. He went back to conclude his day's visitations, and she walked at a brisk pace up several streets, past the vicarage, and on till she entered the gate of Templemore. The good lady's mind had not been inactive, while with quick steps she had hurried along; for all the while it had been busy trying to solve the problem of the best way of telling upon the social condition of the locality she had been visiting, and through what channel it would be most easy to find access to the hearts and homes of Palmer's Court.

CHAPTER IX.

'They are our brethren. They shiver in the cold, and pine under hunger, as well as we. They have feelings, sensitive to wrong and pain, as well as we. They have heart-strings to be broken as well as we. They have souls to be saved as well as we—souls as precious and priceless as our own. A diamond is a diamond, whether it lies buried in a dust heap, or flashes on beauty's finger, or is set in a golden crown.'—GUTHRIE.

SEVERAL weeks have slipped away since last we saw our heroine in the drawing-room at Templemore, on the evening of the day on which she had taken a wintry drive with Walter to Lurly. These had not been altogether idle weeks to her, nor had the drive to Lurly been altogether without result. Marian's own soul had been opening under the fresh spring-showers of love; not that which we

mostly have designated by that name, but a holier, sublimer love it was which was shedding its halo round Marian Temple's life at present. The first and great commandment, and the second, which is like unto it, were being fulfilled in her daily experience.

Matty Barnes had now been domesticated for some weeks at Templemore, and the warmth, comfort, and well-furnished table in the housekeeper's room, added to the skilled medical advice of Dr. Bennet, had all but restored the girl to convalesence, while, as the warmer days of spring advanced, she was daily making steady progress in strength and vigour. To Marian, Matty had proved a source of much healthy interest; and she discovered the late maid-servant to be characterized by much energy of character, sound sense, and, what was of greater importance, religious principles, early instilled into her mind by the late Mrs. Temple, Walter's mother—principles which, by the

Spirit of God, it now appeared had ripened in her heart.

Christmas, with its accustomed festive observances, had passed. The 'Soup Kitchen and Blanket-lending Society' had collected a large sum of money by voluntary subscription and other means brought to bear on the inhabitants of Friarton. It had done, it was said, a great amount of good, in alleviating the distresses of the suffering poor. It had been the channel through which an incredible quantity of plum-pudding had been distributed on Christmas day, landing the Society in a proportionate amount of debt, which, unfortunately for the benevolent promoters, had given rise to murmurs of disapproval from subscribers less addicted to plum-pudding than to stern honesty. Stern people were these, whose hearts were not in the gastric region, and who impatiently inquired to which department of the Society plum-pudding might be properly said to belong,—a query to which, I regret to say, the 'Soup

Kitchen and Blanket Society' failed to afford a satisfactory reply. Mrs. Reddie said (and she was an authority) that the debt was nothing when put in comparison with the happiness diffused among the incredible numbers who partook of the disputed luxury.

We have seen that the projected friendship of Miss Brand and our heroine had scarcely got into shape when we parted with them. Since then it had taken long strides, and many meetings and much good intercourse had taken place between these two; so that now, when we renew our acquaintance with them, we find them intimate friends, bound together by the close and endearing tie of Christian enterprise, and prepared to hold up each other's hands in the prosecution of any scheme for the benefit of others.

As Miss Brand entered the lawn at Templemore, Walter stood at the house door. He accosted the lady, as she ascended the flight of stone stairs leading to the

house, with a cordiality and frankness of manner which said plainly that, in his opinion, the woman's tact displayed by his cousin in her estimate of Miss Brand's worth had not been at fault, nor the vicar's confidence misplaced in selecting her as his friend and adviser when difficulties crossed his path.

'Marian is in the drawing-room, Miss Brand,' said Walter Temple, 'so I won't detain you;' and the elderly lady passed, unannounced, across the hall to the room indicated by Walter.

Miss Brand thought, as she entered, that the occupant had never seemed more lovely than just now, in her closely-fitting Scotch wincey gown, and with her fine auburn hair, simply braided back from the broad white brow, and confined with a tortoise-shell comb of foreign workmanship; this, and a massive cameo brooch, being the only ornament worn by her. She greeted her visitor with a warmth of affection, not

usually displayed by her towards strangers. But there had sprung up a bond of union between these two, singularly strong. They were each marked in their characters, and their friendship was one correspondingly marked. They understood each other, in fact; and how rare it is for even intimate friends to attain to such a state, we all know. Few of us understand our own heart, and still more rarely do we understand that of another.

'I have been to Friars' Alley,' began Miss Brand, 'and it is ten times worse than you or I could have fancied.'

'And what does your personal inspection suggest as a remedy, or rather as a counter-influence; or is the subject too overwhelming to be entered on at once?'

'My visit suggests an incredible number of plans, as Mrs. Reddie would say; but first and foremost, a school — a Ragged School, probably, for these miserable urchins growing up to swell the already alarming mass of heathenism.'

'A Ragged School?'

'Yes; I suspect no other would have a chance of finding scholars. The creatures are half starved, and wholly ignorant. They don't wish to go to school, therefore they must be tempted by "summat to eat."'

'Exactly. I see it is a case in which prevention is better than cure, and it is more effectual any day. So by all means let us tempt them with food. Perhaps, like crocodiles, they may be led by the stomach. People may grumble and call it bribery; but surely that cannot justly be called so which only feeds the hungry. Have you spoken of the plan to Mr.——'

'To no one but yourself.'

A tear stood in Marian's eye, as she pressed the old maid's hand, and said, 'Thank you for taking me into your counsels, my dear kind monitress. I hope nothing shall be lacking on my part to deserve your confidence.'

'There is much needed before this idea

can be got into a train for action. Money first of all—that mighty weapon,—accommodation, and a teacher. We must consider all these wants, and revolve the plan before we talk of it even to Philip. Both he and Mr. Raymond have their hands and heads full already. Now I must go. So good-bye for the present.'

'I shall think what plan can be suggested as the most practicable. Meantime good-bye.'

At an earlier hour on the following morning than was fashionable for morning callers, Marian was ushered into the quaint little sitting-room at the vicarage, specially set apart for Miss Brand's use. It was an austere, old-fashioned apartment in the most ancient part of the house, which dated its foundation back to the time of the second Charles. It had small windows at a considerable height from the floor, and deeply sunk in the wall, every window forming a sort of alcove, lined with dark oak. The

furniture was in keeping with the chamber, being dingy, erect, and old-fashioned,—stiff-backed chairs, a well-worn leather sofa, which had been transferred from Dr. Brand's surgery, and a spindle-legged table, forming the chief articles. There was, however, a bright cheery fire burning in the grate, and a merry little antique timepiece ticking on the mantelpiece. The fire-place was lined with veritable Dutch tiles, presenting true and faithful likenesses of Dutch aldermen, and Dutch fleets in every state of sea usage. The room and the occupant were not unlike each other—both stern, and plain, but enlivened with a warm, hopeful fire. The maiden lady sat at the table with a pile of work before her, which she was neatly arranging into separate small parcels. These contained work to be given to several poor women whom Miss Brand preferred to pay for doing something, than, by misplaced charity, to support in idleness, and at the same time aid in rooting out the few germs

of independence any of them might yet cherish. There was likewise a basket full of stockings, the darning of which was meant to be 'Aunt Kate's' own work, as the knitting of them had formerly been. These were the property of the vicar, and had been worn into holes in the service of poor degraded Friars' Alley and similar regions. Miss Brand looked the personification of a good, useful woman, as she sat there that winter's morning in her brown stuff gown, huge apron, and most inartistic cap; for it must be acknowledged that this worthy old maid had not an artistic eye, and dressed correspondingly.

'Good morning, you dear old lady,' said Marian. 'I have come so early because I have got an idea.'

'A very good thing to get at any time, my dear; but, I specially hope, it is good in this instance, as I presume it has reference to Friars' Alley.'

'Just so. I have been talking to Walter.

He does not like being talked to in general, you know; but I have to force him into my counsels, now and then, in spite of his repugnance. Because, although Melgund is willing to do anything reasonable, he cannot be made to see the reasonableness of some things. So I have been talking to Walter.'

The reader will see from this, that 'talking to Walter' was considered a great point gained.

'Very good,' rejoined Miss Brand, with a little grim smile; 'and what says Walter?'

'Now listen. Not a hundred yards from Friars' Alley proper stands an old house half ruinous. This, it seems, is Walter's property, valueless almost at present, but once used as warehouses by Temple Brothers & Co. The ground floor is wholly disused, but the roof and walls are good. This place he is willing to put in repair, and *let* for a schoolroom. He will put benches and one or two fittings in it, so as to make it quite presentable.'

'And the rent?'

'Nothing for five years. So, if that will do, we have one point gained.'

'Excellent, my dear, so far as it goes. Most encouraging, and let us hope to be able to accept his generous offer.'

'That is not all — not quite; but the other, I fear, may not meet your approval so readily.'

'Let me hear, and then I shall be able to judge.'

'You know it would be necessary that there should be two schools—one for boys and one for girls. Mr. Brand must undertake the former (and, by the way, the accommodation in the old store is sufficient for both). For the girls I have a plan. You know Martha Barnes?'

'Yes; an excellent girl.'

'I propose to place her as teacher in the female department. She is, as you say, an excellent girl; but she has, moreover, a mind of a superior order, and would go into

the work with all her heart. I feel persuaded she would suit.'

'I think she might; but we must be cautious, for half the battle depends on the teacher.'

'Everything. But the girl has character, which she certainly has not got by inheritance. I have not mentioned the plan to her yet, however.'

'Right, quite right.'

'I wish to do something for her. Now that she has grown so much stronger, she chafes at her dependent position. I don't think she might like to return again to the sort of work she was at. The fact is, she is rather above her position. I have not yet told you all, however. I shall esteem it a privilege to assist in so good a work, and hope Mr. Brand will allow me to pay the first year's salary to the female teacher, whether Mattie be chosen or not. I don't wish she should be, unless she is found fitted.'

'God bless you, my dear young lady. Of course Philip and everybody will let you pay the salary, and we'll thank God at the same time for having put such a liberal thought into your head,—if you are sure you can afford it,' she added inquiringly. 'We cannot lend that to the Lord which we have not got.'

'Oh, I can afford it perfectly. I don't need much money, you know, and have plenty; so let us consider that a bargain. It has been owing to you, my dear Miss Brand, that my heart has been opened.'

'Is it not true what I told you, that once let the love of God get into your heart, and his work will be found ready to your hand? An idle Christian will not be a growing Christian.'

'It is quite true. All the same, you have been the instrument of showing me the way to work. For which thanks be to you.'

'My dear girl, God himself ordains the work that his own people are to accomplish

for Him. For some, it is an active working in his cause; for others, it is only the being fervent in spirit and diligent in business; and some, you know, "only stand and wait." But to all alike it is God's work.'

With the mutual promise to meet again soon, and hear the result of Mr. Brand's views upon their scheme, the two ladies separated — Marian to meet a large and fashionable party at lunch, the elder lady to prosecute the scheme of benevolence for Palmer's Court.

Miss Brand could not be called a coquette, certainly; yet did she, a sedate, gruff old woman of sixty, indulge one, at least, of the habits alleged to belong to that obnoxious class alone. In fact she kept 'two strings to her bow;' one of them being, as we have seen, Miss Temple, the other an individual of a very different stamp, who could only be approached through the medium of her nephew, or some person of the sterner sex, for that one to which Miss Brand belonged,

this capricious person held in strange detestation. Mr. Grining, an old bachelor of immense wealth, and albeit a misogynist, was, by some mysterious arrangement of nature, distinguished by the most large-hearted benevolence, or rather, we should say, liberality. His purse flew open at every well-vindicated plea of distress. From his earliest introduction to St. Paul's, Mr. Brand had found in the misanthropic old bachelor the best, the most enlightened friend of the poor, as well as the most generous supporter of every good and noble work; his one weakness being that to which the monks of St. Columba were addicted. Indeed, the main point to be kept in view in approaching him was to keep a woman from his sight; and success was certain. Mrs. Reddie, in pursuit of one of her many charitable objects, had indeed with characteristic, if misguided energy, bearded the lion in his den. It was the first and only occasion of her doing so, from which we may perhaps infer that her recep-

tion had not been of a nature to encourage a speedy return.

To Mr. Grining, then, it was that Miss Brand next directed her thoughts for the means of putting into execution what appeared the best plan for reaching the masses in Friars' Alley. Mr. Brand coincided with his aunt in her plans, and was just leaving the vicarage to repair to Mr. Grining, when the following note from Templemore was placed in Miss Brand's hands:—

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am very happy to be able to tell you that on learning my offer about the female teacher, Walter has, in addition to his former proposal, insisted on being responsible for the salary of the boys' teacher. I am writing in great haste to tell you of this, as I feel sure you will be gratified that the means for starting our enterprise are to be forthcoming so easily. Trusting that your good nephew joins me in this sentiment, and approves my cousin's

good intentions,—I am ever yours, very very truly,

'MARIAN E. L. TEMPLE.'

This communication caused emotions of very sincere joy in the hearts of those two faithful workers in the good Father's vineyard. A happiness which proceeded from a twofold source—first, for the sake of the poor forlorn outcasts themselves; and secondly, for the fruits of God's Spirit, which such noble generosity indicated in the bosom of Walter Temple. Surely God himself was working in the young man's heart, too long permitted to lie fallow, or waste its fine qualities on the trivialities of the world. Yet Walter had not been altogether a worldling. The 'still small voice' had never been altogether silenced, even while the world alone had seemed to be his all in all. His had been a praying, pious mother, who had sought to lead her boy in the fear of the Lord. More than that, while yet the early bloom of man-

hood had crowned his years, he had been betrothed to his cousin Dorothy. We have heard what sort of person she was, and may infer that her affianced husband was likely to have in him 'something good towards the Lord his God.' And such had been the case, for at that time both he and Marian had cast in their lot with God's people. But Dorothy had been early summoned home to glory. Five years had passed since the grave had closed over that one so dearly loved; and those two, who had lived in the light of her piety, had been drifted, half unwillingly, down the gay, treacherous stream in which their bark was moored. A better influence, however, had arisen, in their connection with the Brands, the Ragged School in Friars' Alley being the first ripe grapes from this influence, and it was influence which was to tell to all generations upon the denizens of this little world of sin. The school was even now registered in heaven, as the future birth-place of immortal souls,

for an endless eternity. It may be the mother's prayers were at length being answered after an interval of nearly twenty years.

There was yet much to be done, much money required, before the plan proposed by Miss Brand could be got into working order. The small fry floating up the river of social life in Friars' Alley must be angled for, must be induced, by some tempting bait stretched out to them, to enter upon a system of reformation. As Miss Brand had said, they were half starved, and the greater proportion of them wholly ignorant and indifferent as to the benefits of education. To offer nourishment for their bodies seemed indeed the only way open by which to convey some glimpses of light to their darkened minds. But for this object, money must be had. Money, money is the never-ending cry when anything is to be done for the poor. Thanks be to God that there are so many willing to give of their abundance to the cause of

Christ. How otherwise could the Christian work have been done which has been done all the world over? The vicar therefore did not abandon his purpose of appealing to Mr. Grining when Walter's generous offer was made. The capricious old gentleman lived in an old mansion-house (one of the oldest in Friarton), and was entirely served by male domestics. The vicar found Mr. Grining, as usual, gruff, but hearty, grumbling that a woman-teacher was necessary, and not quite satisfied that two of the sex had been at the bottom of the clergyman's new scheme. Nevertheless Mr. Brand did not quit the Cedars without a bank cheque in his pocket, and *carte blanche* to provide as many urchins —even *wenches*—as could be induced to attend the school with two meals a day, at his, Mr. Grining's expense, for one year or more. A magnificent response this to the clergyman's application, but not too magnificent for the large-hearted benevolence of the misogynist at the Cedars to suggest.

CHAPTER X.

'But it is far easier, within any district, to bring every child to school than every adult to church.'—DR. HANNA.

'Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour and to wait.'
LONGFELLOW.

'I HAVE found work for you *now*, Matty,' said Miss Temple to her young friend and *protégé* one day about a week after the events recorded above. 'And just the sort of work you will like, and that you are fitted for. So cheer up, Miss Barnes, for that is to be your title in future.'

'Miss Barnes! Miss?' asked Matty in some surprise. 'And why should I not be called Matty as heretofore?'

'Because you are going to be transformed into Miss Barnes, and female teacher of the Friars' Alley Ragged School.'

Now Matty had been partly in her benefactress's confidence, and had felt deeply interested in her plans, so far as they had been submitted to her, entering heartily into the scheme; but of herself as teacher she had never once thought, consequently the sudden communication took her, as we have said, much by surprise. She fixed astonished eyes upon Miss Temple, and said, 'Me! Miss?'

'Yes—you. Don't you fancy the idea of being an agent in helping on the good work?'

'That I do, if I could but think I am fit for it. But I am no scholar, Miss, as you know, beyond my station.'

'You have quite enough of scholarship for the work; and you have what is far better, heart for it, and I think, Matty, love for Him whose work it is,' she added, taking the girl's hand kindly as she spoke. 'And firm-

ness, with love, must be the chief supports of the teacher. You have those, I think; but, moreover, you know that God giveth strength to the weak.'

'True, Miss Temple. And I feel very weak for such a work as this.'

'Well, well, in the meantime think over the proposal, and give it your prayerful consideration, and I trust God will direct your decision.'

'I thank you very much, my dear kind friend. Whatever I can do for you, I shall esteem it my privilege to do; although I can never hope to repay all your kindness to me.'

'I desire no reward, Matty. You know what I have often told you, that by bearing one another's burdens, we are fulfilling the law of Christ. If you have been my burden in that sense, you must assist me now to bear the heavier burden of those little outcasts in Friars' Alley.'

A week or two after this conversation,

at an early hour in the morning, the rather unusual appearance of a smart brougham, drawn by a fine grey mare, and attended by servants in livery, astonished the denizens of Friars' Alley. It stopped at the corner of the street, off which the fetid labyrinth of Friars' Alley opened; and from this handsome equipage alighted two ladies, the first elderly, whose attire afforded no attraction to the inquisitive passers-by; but who bore on her homely, even harsh-featured face, something undefinable, which induced confidence in her good intentions, and power of will to carry them out. She was accompanied by a younger lady, differing greatly from her in all that met the eye. Fair in face and dignified in carriage, she was dressed in a fashionable, although simple morning dress; but she was heart and soul at one with her companion in the object of their early visit. They were met by two gentlemen, who had been waiting their arrival for the last five minutes.

Handsome young men, both of them; and doubtless the reader has, ere this, identified the members of the party as the promoters of the new Ragged School.

This was a day to be marked by a white stone in the archives of Palmer's Court, a day which promised greater glory than did its old ancestral days of prosperity. It was the opening for the first time of the school; and Miss Brand, Marian, the vicar, and Walter Temple, had come to be present on so joyous an occasion, to witness the first-fruit of their labour and anxiety.

The first child who entered the room, upon the ringing of the bell, was our friend 'Blacking,' to whom the promise of a penny roll and a jug of milk to breakfast, with the prospect of broth and other unheard-of delicacies to dinner, were temptations not to be resisted, and counterbalanced in his youthful mind the fearful ordeal of going to school. He was followed by several urchins, prompted probably by the same

motive, who came in with hungry, and for the most part unwashed faces. Others loitered about the door, lacking courage to enter, and, as it were, enrol themselves under the new *regime* of 'learning summat.' But upon them also, as they pressed their not very clean faces against the window, and peered eagerly through the new panes of glass, the sight of the rolls and jugs proved too much for their powers of resistance, and, at the first invitation from Mr. Brand, most of them entered—crossed the Rubicon between savage life and civilisation, only one or two of the most determined running off. The force by degrees mustered fifty—thirty girls and twenty boys; and this was not a bad beginning. It was a rich reward to see these fifty poor forlorn little creatures thus brought in, to be fed and taught. When they heard words of kindness and encouragement addressed to them individually by the teachers and their patrons, it called up on most of the dirty faces a smile

of pleasure, which seemed quite a stranger there.

Uphill work, it must be confessed, was the effort to gain an entrance into the darkened minds of the pupils at the Ragged School. Many were the disappointments the devoted friends and faithful teachers met with. Scholars who had promised fair, suddenly disappeared, never to be seen again; others were removed by their parents to assist in some life of vagrancy or costering, and they, spite of all inducements, could not be prevailed upon to send them back. This sort of thing had been foreseen; but still, each instance of falling away was a fresh source of grief, calling for renewed faith. It was a work of faith, as well as a labour of love; and in faith and love the work was carried on. Many and varied were the forms of opposition which the Ragged School had to encounter in the early days of its existence; less from the poor themselves than from professors of religion—a religion which, it

seemed, was too conservative in its principles to tolerate the novel method of helping people to help themselves. But patience, love, and perseverance effect wonders, and wonders were effected by their means, even in Friars' Alley.

CHAPTER XI.

'Oh, not in cruelty, not in wrath,
The Reaper came that day;
'Twas an angel that visited the green earth,
And took the flowers away.'

LONGFELLOW.

'"Yes, you deserve 'em from me. I thieved for you when I was a child not half as old as this!" pointing to Oliver.'—DICKENS.

MARIAN TEMPLE'S interest in the Ragged School did not terminate with the beginning of the work; but, on the contrary, she persevered in the objects at which its foundation aimed—namely, the elevation of the masses in Friars' Alley by sympathy and personal encouragement, as well as by the manifold blessings inherent to education. And in

unison with such aims she continued to be one of the chief ministering angels, if we may be allowed the expression. For was it not an angelic ministry to which she, like many others, was devoting herself? Many were the cases of sickness and distress relieved by her, which the Ragged School was the means of bringing before her;—misery to which she ministered relief both out of the now awakened sympathy of her heart, and out of the abundance of her substance. Miss Temple, following in the wake of good, practical Miss Brand, was not one of these injudicious good persons for whom any tale of sorrow, however unreliable its source or unworthy its object, was sure to evoke a ready response, and extract shillings and half-crowns, to be afterwards transferred to the pockets of the publican, at the gaily lighted gin-shop round the corner. No; Marian Temple, having taken up the work of helping her fellow-creatures to rise, judged she was more likely to effect

her object by helping them to help themselves, than by encouraging them in the systems of begging and imposition too common amongst them. She tried to distinguish between sin and sorrow—how often, alas! wedded too closely to be separated. It is true, she was very frequently imposed on; and yet, as it became apparent that either in person or by means of an agent she was determined to sift the truth, the mere beggars of the district gradually ceased their attempts at obtaining assistance.

As time wore on, after the opening of the school, Miss Temple became no stranger in Palmer's Court, and might frequently be seen threading her way up the rickety stairs and through the mazes of its dark passages, sometimes alone, more frequently attended by a boy or girl from the school, as a guide, in search of a sick mother, or starving brothers and sisters. And when the door closed behind her on these occasions, when 'the elegant *young lady, as had no pride, but a kind word*

for every one,' visited these neglected, poverty-stricken homes of sorrow, there seemed to linger in the dingy apartment a glimmer from the brightness the angels wear, and the smile left on many a haggard, weary, sin-beaten countenance seemed to say that to their ears the flutter of the angel's wings was still heard, as the retreating footsteps sounded in the distance.

Among the girls under Matty's tuition there was one who especially attracted Miss Temple's attention, one of the most poorly clad among those who had scarcely a *whole* garment among them. 'Little Clare,' as she was called, had a strangely keen, *spirituelle* look, which was more remarkable as her face was lean and wan, and her dark eyes sickly. But her dress, though very poor, was clean, and her mended garments were adjusted with a certain taste and neatness, unlike her companions. Marian knew little personally of the child, save that her name was Clare, and that she was generally one of the first

to rise and curtsey as she entered the school. One day, just when winter was setting in, with frosty mornings and drizzling wet afternoons, little Clare was absent from her place, and Miss Temple missed the wonted bright smile of welcome from the little pupil. On inquiring, 'Where is little Clare?' she was told she had been absent for several days, and was sick it was said.

'Who can tell me where little Clare is to be found?' asked Miss Temple.

'Please, m'm, she lives up the attic—head of our stairs,' was uttered by several eager little voices at one and the same instant.

'And where may that be?'

'Please, m'm, let me show you,' and 'please, m'm, Madame's her mother,' were severally answered. The first appearing the only mode of eliciting the desired information, the visitor, with Matty's permission, took one of the children as pioneer, who soon conducted her to 'the attic—head of our stairs.' With her hand on the latch of

Madame's door, Marian said softly, 'May I come in?'

'Yes, Mademoiselle, entrez.'

This response proceeded from a poor-looking, sallow-complexioned little woman, with dark eyes which looked unnaturally large, from the wide sockets and hollow cheeks in which they were sunk. She was miserably clad, and the old attic had only two or three wretched articles of furniture in it, scarcely enough to entitle it to be called a human habitation. The woman, who had some fine sewing on her lap, had been sitting with her head resting on her hands, only raising it at the entrance of a stranger.

'I have come to ask about little Clare; is she ill?'

'Ah, oui. Yes, Mademoiselle, she is var ill, très malade, oui; ah, ma pauvre petite,' replied the woman, still sitting motionless, but indicating with a motion of her hand to the opposite side of the room. Here, close under the rafters, on a mere apology for a mattress,

lay the prostrate form of the bright little ragged scholar, whom Miss Temple now ascertained to be of French origin. Crossing the apartment and leaning down, Miss Temple took the hand of the sick child, who was lying with her eyes closed, and motionless as a bit of marble, her black curls straggling on the pillow, which was clean and smooth. But little Clare looked like death, while the mother sat motionless and tearless. It was the immobility, the tearlessness of despair.

When the child felt the gentle touch of Marian's fingers, she opened her eyes. The old smile lighted up for an instant the wan, wee face. The eyes, however, quickly dropped again, as if the exertion was too great for the exhausted strength of the feeble orbs. Then opening them once more, she looked at her visitor again, not now with the same smile of recognition, but with a sort of incoherent wonderment; and endeavouring to speak, she said in a weak whisper, 'Maman c'est une ange,' and closing them

again, seemed to have no more to do with life's affairs for the present.

Miss Temple perceiving that the poor tearless mother was a Frenchwoman, addressed her in her native tongue. A half joyous expression passed for a moment across her sad face as she heard what, except from the lips of little Clare, was the long-silent language of her native land. It was but momentary, however, for to that poor heart sorrow was too close to permit a ray of happiness to lighten its care. Relapsing into her former broken-hearted attitude, it was with some difficulty that Marian extracted the following story.

Madame, it seemed, was the daughter of an officer in the service of the first Napoleon. He lost his life at Waterloo, leaving a widow and daughter with scarcely any provision, yet proud of their lineage, which traced from some of the oldest and purest blood of France. At an early age Louise Mamette became acquainted with Henri de Basque, a

young artist, attractive in person and graceful in manners, but, as the result proved, of loose principles. Henri was poor, but Louise was very beautiful, and in a moment of mutual passion these two became man and wife, an act of folly which the officer's widow visited with her condign displeasure, utterly refusing to receive her daughter again under her roof. Henri with his young wife came to England, that refuge of distressed foreigners; endeavouring there to gain a livelihood as teacher of drawing; while Louise exerted herself to add in a small way to their scanty store, by teaching French to little girls in the neighbourhood of their humble lodgings in a third-rate London street. Neither she nor her husband were successful; and as three or four little ones were added to the family, and absolute want stared them in the face, Henri, after struggling with poverty vainly for a while, took to gambling and other vicious courses. Leaving London, they wandered from place to

place in search of employment, ever growing poorer and poorer, till at last, two years ago, in Friarton he deserted her, leaving Louise and four young children with nothing but what she was able to earn by sewing and embroidering for some of the shops—a precarious kind of livelihood. Three of the children died of fever, brought on chiefly by want and exposure to cold; and now there was only Clare left. She had heard also that her faithless husband was dead some six months ago. Like other unfortunates, Madame had found her way to Palmer's Court, and Clare in God's providence had found hers to the Ragged School, where the poor foreigner was glad to have her go for the sake of the food she got. Madame went on to tell how the child had frequently spoken of the belle demoiselle, who used to smile so sweetly, and wore 'robes tres élégantes;' and how at this moment Madame had not a *sou* to procure food, a luxury which she had not that day tasted; and how she was too

exhausted to finish a piece of work for which she would receive scarcely sufficient to procure a meal. Clare, she was sure, was dying as the rest had died, and the blessed Virgin had forsaken her, concluded Madame, sitting with folded hands, paralysed with want and sorrow.

'Mademoiselle, c'est impossible que Je demande la charité. We shall die together, Clare and I.'

Marian spoke gentle words of sympathy and kindness, in her own French, to the poor woman; and we all know what an effect such words produce upon the wounded heart. Then putting money in her hand, she despatched her without delay to procure food and fuel, promising to remain with the child till she should return. She was not long in doing so, with a basket of coals and some chips; and true to her instinct as a Frenchwoman, with coffee and rolls. Marian left her to prepare the much-needed meal, and went in search of a doctor for little Clare.

"Ah, Mr Vine! it does me good to see you so cheery over your pills and mixtures."—*Page* 137.

There was a good old surgeon round the corner, named Vine, who kept a shop for dispensing medicine, and had a kind, tender heart. To him Miss Temple had several times had recourse on discovering cases of sickness among the poor in Palmer's Court. To Mr. Vine, then, she resorted on the present occasion, and found the worthy little man, spectacles on nose, behind the counter, compounding drugs for the benefit of his fellow-creatures.

'Each one at his proper work, Madame, some for the bodies, some for the souls, some, like yourself, for both. Who is ill to-day?' asked the surgeon on Miss Temple's entrance.

'Ah, Mr. Vine, it does me good to see you so cheery over your pills and mixtures, and to know that they are for some poor sufferer. And now, I wish you to come and see a little French girl, dying of want, I really think.'

'Oh, eh! want kills more of them than my pills, Madame,—ha! ha!'

'Your pills! Mr. Vine? Why, they never kill, I fancy, but only cure.'

'Ha! ha! they're meant to do so, any way. In the court this case?' he asked, adjusting his spectacles, and taking his hat from the pin over the counter.

'Yes, in the old place.'

'Kills plenty does Palmer's Court. Now I'm ready. After you, Madame. Better take my *doctor's bottle*, though.'

'Ah, yes, do; this is just a case for it.'

The *doctor's bottle* contained brandy, which he was in the habit of taking along with him when visiting cases where starvation was the principal complaint. He and Marian were soon in 'the court,' and by the side of the sick child.

Hers was not altogether a case of starvation, however, for at the Ragged School Clare had been well fed. But she had taken a severe cold, since which she had scarcely partaken of any nourishment, until she had sunk to the state in which Miss Temple

found her. Mr. Vine looked doubtfully at his feeble patient, while Madame watched his expression with nervous tremor. Clare seemed to revive after receiving a spoonful from the *doctor's bottle;* and gently raising her, he examined her with much care.

'Feverish cold — influenza — exhausted system—must be nourished—must be kept quiet, Madame. Poor child! poor child! Forgotten all my French,—ha! ha! Make her understand no great danger at present, but must be taken care of. Send round to my place for some physic.'

'Very good, Mr. Vine, leave the nourishment to me; and will you be so good as put little Clare on your list of patients?'

'Ah, eh! yes; very well, ma'am, and good morning. Poor thing!' And with these words the little surgeon was on his way down the crazy old stair, and the lady was rearranging with gentle hand the poor bed of little Clare, while Madame was busying herself in getting ready a cup of coffee to be

offered to her. Miss Temple did not leave till she had seen the first dose of the doctor's prescription administered. The child recognised her, and said faintly, but with the old smile, 'Thank you, Miss!'

The next day and the one following found Marian again by the couch of the sick child. Each day she saw slight symptoms of improvement, and Mr. Vine looked hopeful when Miss Temple called to ask his opinion of his patient; and the poor mother had regained in some degree her native vivacity, and plied her needle with dexterity as she sat by Clare's bedside. Two or three days elapsed in which Marian did not visit at Palmer's Court, and on re-entering the attic she was not a little shocked at the altered appearance of the little invalid, who lay tossing in high fever, her pretty curls all shaved off, and the poor pained head surrounded with wet cloths. Madame sat by, wringing her hands, uttering incoherent appeals to the Virgin, and bemoaning her own

and her child's sad fate at intervals. On Marian's entrance she turned and said, 'Mademoiselle, it is death. I do know it too well.'

Her visitor tried to meet her sorrow with some words of consolation, scarcely of hope, for too apparent was the mark of the fell destroyer on the countenance of the little scholar. Opening her eyes, she saw and recognised Miss Temple, and stretched out her wasted hand, which she took in hers. And Clare said slowly, 'Mademoiselle, I love Him. I am going to Jesus now—"just as I am." Tell my mother of Him too. He will take care of her when I am gone.'

'Yes, darling child. Does Jesus take care of you now?'

'Oh yes. My sins are all taken away.'

'In Jesus' blood?'

'Oh yes. Thank Miss Barnes for telling me about his love.'

'Yes, dear child. I am so thankful that you love Him, Clare, and are not afraid to die.'

'I have no fear, dear lady. Only my poor mamma.'

'I shall try to lead her to Jesus, your dear Saviour, too, Clare.'

The child pressed Miss Temple's hand, and sank back exhausted. Marian tried to explain to poor Madame all that the child had been saying, and besought her to go to Jesus, the only Mediator between her and the Father. Madame wept, and as her visitor knelt and commended her and the dying child to God, through Jesus Christ the Son, she responded with a hearty Amen through her sobs—the sobbing of a very desolate spirit.

Marian was obliged then to take leave, and, on returning the following day, found that little Clare had died in the night. Her soul had gone up to God, and she had been registered in heaven as one born at the Ragged School.

Marian redeemed her promise to the sainted child, and 'took care' of the poor bereaved

Frenchwoman. She procured for her work of a finer description, and for which she was well paid, from among the ladies of Friarton, who appreciated the dainty work of Madame's expert fingers. Ere long, too, she found for her a more congenial home in a less destitute part of the town. Here she lived for many years, and her kind benefactress had the *satisfying* pleasure of hearing her boldly profess her faith in her child's Saviour, and renounce the errors of the Church of Rome, in which she had been bred.

This is one selected from among many instances of real permanent good which could be traced to the instrumentality of the Ragged School in Friars' Alley.

Then there was the case of young John Brown. John Brown the elder had his town residence in what had probably been one of the good monks' wine cellars; at least it was below the ground floor, all the light it had being admitted by a grated window from the court above. Here John's reputed

wife with five or six children lived; but that gentleman spent greater part of his time wandering about the country, buying rabbit and hare skins, sometimes also killing hares and netting rabbits as occasion offered. On one of these precarious expeditions in which he engaged, John had the misfortune to come into too close contact with a keeper, and being hauled up before a magistrate, was sentenced to six months' imprisonment in the county jail. Mrs. Brown and the children being thus deprived of even such means of subsistence as their father gave them, had recourse to begging, doing a few jobs of thieving as opportunity occurred. It was just when affairs were in this state with the Browns that the Ragged School was opened, and Mr. Brand at once pitched on the children as fit subjects to come to it. With this view he paid a visit to the poacher's wife. It was an early hour in the forenoon he chose for the purpose; and he found Mrs. Brown surrounded by six children, the

youngest a baby in arms, the eldest a smart, shrewd, but rather sinister-looking boy of about ten. Their miserable cellar was so dark, even in the full day-light, that Mr. Brand stumbled, on entering, over what proved to be a little girl of two or three, rolling in a nude condition upon the dark, dirty floor. Mrs. Brown, dropping a curtsey in the true beggar's whine, bid his honour welcome.

'I was sorry to hear of your misfortune, and of your husband's misdeeds, Mrs. Brown,' he said.

'Thank your honour kindly for calling on a poor lone creature, with them six as good as fatherless children to provide for; a lone woman as has nothink to give them, nor bite nor sup this blessed day,' she replied, wiping her eyes with the sleeve of a very ragged and not over clean gown.

'It is just of these children I am come to talk to you. We wish you to let them come to the school at Temple's Store; there they

will get two meals a-day, and will be taught, which, you know, is far better for them than begging in the streets.'

'God bless your honour, I'm sure I'll be glad indeed to send them.'

'I am glad to hear you say so; and as you say they have had no breakfast, I'll just take them along with me just now—all but the infant of course. Come now, little ones, make haste before the dinner is all eaten up.'

The younger children responded to Mr. Brand's appeal with some readiness; but at a look exchanged between the elder boy and his mother, the former said—

'Thank your reverence, but I can't come to the school to-day, noways. I've got to go and help mother to earn summat to pay the rent. Rent-day's to-morrow, sir, please; and mother and me's got to make it before night.'

'Yes, please your honour, sir. John he's a clever lad at a many thinks, and will help me to have the rent 'gainst to-morrow. But

he'll be sure to go to the school, please sir, after this day.'

'Very well, see you come to-morrow, John; and meanwhile, I'll take these four along with me.'

Mr. Brand proceeded, followed by the little regiment of recruits, amidst the titters and gibes of sundry juvenile companions in the court, who seemed to regard the whole affair as a good joke, and one not likely to be very enduring—

'There goes Tim and Sal to the Ragged School! Ay! it'll be the beggars' school next,' shouted one.

'Where's John, Tim? Gone to snap up some more o' Farmer Green's turkeys—eh?'

'Is turkey stewed good for supper, Sal?' cried a third; all their innuendoes calling in question poor John's honesty. Nothing daunted, the humane vicar strode along till he reached the school, into which he marshalled his ragged squad. Once initiated,

these four children attended well; and except on some great occasion, when the whole force of Browns were needed for some peculiarly touching appeal to the tender feelings of some benevolent individual, they were generally to be seen on the benches of the Ragged School. Although still ragged, yet their appearance had greatly improved under the *regime* of soap and water, and wholesome food.

The morrow, and several more morrows passed, but of course John never made his appearance. Mr. Brand made a second attempt to induce him, but with the same result. At length, after a third visit, he prevailed on this erratic genius to come. Once there, the novelty of the thing seemed to have some attractions for him, and he attended with amazing regularity, learned quickly, and began to lose a little the sinister expression which had struck Mr. Brand so forcibly on first seeing him. The teacher gave a good report of his progress, and Mr.

Brand began to feel very hopeful of his protegé, John Brown. One day John was absent; the next day found his place still vacant. On the teacher making inquiry at Tim, the reply was—

'Please, master, father's come home.'

Yes, it was true, the father's time of incarceration had expired, and for weeks the united efforts of both the teacher and Mr. Brand proved unsuccessful in getting John to return to school. He was always said to be away with father. True enough, no doubt; but alas, what was he doing?

After a lapse of some months the teacher was surprised one morning, upon entering the schoolroom, to see John seated on one of the distant benches. When the children were about to separate for their hour of play, Mr. Allen called John and said, clapping him on the shoulder,

'Well, John, my lad, I'm glad to see you back again. Where have you been all this time?'

No answer. John stood hanging his head, and fumbling uneasily with his hands in his pockets.

'We have made many inquiries after you. Why have you been so long absent?'

Still no answer.

'At all events, you are back again now, and I hope you won't forsake the school again. Mr. Brand has been quite grieved, and Miss Temple, too, John, at losing sight of you.'

'No, really, sir; you don't mean to say that she cared for the likes of me—me.'

'Indeed she does, my boy; and has asked many and many a time if you were returned, and where you had gone to.'

John's assumed indifference entirely forsook him when he learned the interest that was taken in him; the tears sprang into his eyes, and he said—

'Oh master, they don't know how unworthy I be's. Oh sir, I'm a'most ashamed to come back; but, somehow, I could not stay away.'

'You are quite right to return. But why have you been so long absent? What have you been doing?' asked Mr. Allen kindly.

'Oh master, I've been in again,' he said in a low voice, with the tears running down his cheeks.

'In where, John?'

Tears were the only response. And then Mr. Allen understood what was meant by this technical term, and observed for the first time that the poor child's hair had got the true prison cut. Yes, he had been in jail now for the third time, for stealing poultry, it appeared, when along with his father, who, however, had made his escape, while his unhappy son had got thirty days' imprisonment.

'Indeed I didn't want to; but I was obliged. Oh, do you think she'll ever mind me any more when she hears?' sobbed the afflicted child. 'Mr. Brand will be angry, won't he?'

'Here he is; ask him,' answered Mr.

Allen, as Mr. Brand entered at that moment. 'Come, John, tell your story to Mr. Brand.'

John hung his head; but being reassured by the vicar, told his story; and you may be very sure it was to no unsympathizing heart that sad tale was related. After solemnly warning and urging him to forsake the dangerous path into which he was being led, Mr. Brand asked him to kneel down, and there he commended the poor repenting boy to God, who alone keeps from falling. John rose from his knees, wiping his eyes with his ragged sleeve, and took leave of the vicar, inwardly resolved never to be found undeserving of the kindness bestowed on him. From that day John Brown remained stedfast in his attendance.

Shortly afterwards, his father being taken in some fresh offence, was destined to pass the next five years of his life in the docks with hard labour. Mrs. Brown, desiring to betake herself to her former mode of life, removed to another town where she was not

known, Friarton being pretty well weary of Betty Brown and her offspring. The three younger children were accordingly taken away from the school, in spite of the strenuous efforts of their friends to prevent it. They consented to give her a sum of money, on condition that she would allow them to remain. The little creatures were placed, at the Temples' expense, under the care of a respectable woman; and so far, all went well. But the money being speedily expended, Betty bethought herself of extracting a little more from the same source, and one day took possession of her children, and strictly refused to yield up the charge.

The managers, of course, soon understood that such demands would be endless, and were unwillingly compelled to let the children go but thus losing these poor things, they were more determined, if possible, to keep possession of John, who was of an age to assert his own will in the matter. It appeared that he was

as resolved as they could be, not to allow himself (even by his own mother) to be entrapped back again to the life of sin he had led before his acquaintance with the Ragged School, and resolutely refused to go with his mother.

'I aint a-going to live in that ere way no longer, mother; and you knows as yer a doing wrong, to take off them poor things from where they're a-learning better ways. You need not ask me to go alongst with you, for I aint.' And he kept his word.

John Brown, the poacher's son, the juvenile thief, who had been three times in jail before twelve years had passed over his head, the street beggar, the public nuisance, the lad well described, in the significant words of his mother, as being 'clever at a many thinks,' the boy reclaimed from a life of infamy and vice, is now himself the successful teacher of a Ragged School, in a large manufacturing town in one of the midland counties,—'a brand plucked from the burning'

by means of the Ragged School,—a sovereign instance of the power of kindness to find a way even into the most hardened heart.

CHAPTER XII.

'Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.'—ECCLES. xi. 1.

IT was thus that Marian Temple did the work which God had laid before her for the taking up. We need scarcely add, that in the doing of it she found much more of the *satisfaction* which she sought, than she had done when more engrossed with worldly pursuits. It had been a trial for her many a time to enter those dirty unwholesome houses in Palmer's Court; a test of her faith which it had needed not a few struggles to overcome. But she had likewise found much pleasure in the work, earnestly seeking to do good to others, who sadly wanted assistance; and she found that

'God's grace was sufficient for her.' He helped her in her labour of love. She also realized the words of Miss Brand, when she said, 'Get the love of God into your heart, and you will see plenty of ways to help on his work,' to be true words.

The school thus formed became the nucleus of a well-organized mission work in the district. And now, ten years after, on the site lately occupied by the old store stands a neat little chapel, in which every Sabbath the regular services of the church are held; so that the gospel is brought, if not to the hearts—which is the work of God's Holy Spirit only—at least to the doors of the neglected population. On the opposite side of the way may be seen a substantial, plain building, containing two large airy apartments, besides various others of smaller dimensions. This is the new Ragged School, erected from funds bequeathed by the will of the late Mr. Grining, and supported by the whole body of the inhabitants of Friar-

ton, who, during these ten years, have been led to recognise the benefit it has been to the town. 'God bless the Ragged School!' we heard a sturdy young blacksmith saying, as he passed the place the other day. 'It was there I first learned what it was to be a human being.'

'Long may Miss Temple's school flourish!' say some of the fashionable ladies. 'We are not tormented by urchins running at our heels, beseeching coppers, and displaying naked bodies and diseased limbs. The Ragged School has certainly done good in that respect.'

The pew-opener in the chapel, which by the way has been called 'Temple Church,' is a sober, respectable young man, a brush-maker by trade. He still retains the cognomen attaching to him in his youth, but has now prefixed to it that of Philip, which he received on the day of his baptism in St. Paul's, three years since. One could scarcely identify this nice young man with 'Blacking;'

but it is he. And his case is only one out of many where the rescued children of Friars' Alley are now filling respectable places in society—that society whose hand was against them, and against which their hand was lifted—with credit to themselves, and the nursery in which they were reared.

Miss Brand is not too old to take a lively interest in her pet scheme; and her companion in the work, now Mrs. Walter Temple, has almost the entire roll of her domestics supplied from the ranks of the Ragged School. Mrs. Moses Reddie is still the same energetic person she was ten years ago, and has at present in the press a small volume in favour of Ragged Schools as a means of evangelizing the masses.

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